

midstream

A QUARTERLY JEWISH REVIEW

SPRING, 1957

Articles:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| • SHLOMO KATZ | The Eye of the Hurricane |
| • GEORGE LICHTHEIM | The Dilemma of Britain |
| • MAURICE SAMUEL | Reflections on
Stalinist Anti-Semitism
—A Symposium |
| • EUGENE LYONS | |
| • EARL BROWDER | |
| • GREGOR ARONSON | |
| • HARRY L. GOLDEN | Haldeman-Julius—
The Success that Failed |
| • A. A. SICROFF | The Spanish Obsession |

Fiction:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| • YITZHAK SHENHAR | In a Ma'abarah |
|-------------------|----------------|

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From the Four Corners:

Achmed for Dinner, <i>by</i> CARL ALPERT.....	2
The Bread of Affliction @ \$25 a Day, <i>by</i> A. DANZIGER.....	100
The Mysterious S. A., <i>by</i> ANITA ENGLE.....	103
Every Day in Every Way, <i>by</i> SARAH C. SCHACK.....	106

Articles:

The Eye of the Hurricane, <i>by</i> SHLOMO KATZ.....	5
The Dilemma of Britain, <i>by</i> GEORGE LICHTHEIM.....	14
Haldeman-Julius—The Success that Failed, <i>by</i> HARRY L. GOLDEN.....	26
Reflections on Stalinist Anti-Semitism, A Symposium, <i>by</i> MAURICE SAMUEL, EUGENE LYONS, EARL BROWDER, GREGOR ARONSON.....	49
The Spanish Obsession, <i>by</i> A. A. SICROFF.....	63

Fiction:

In a Ma'abarah, <i>by</i> YITZHAK SHENHAR.....	35
------------------------------------------------	----

Poetry:

Seth at Nine Hundred, <i>by</i> LEO HABER.....	25
Inventory, <i>by</i> JASCHA KESSLER.....	48
Looking at a Map, <i>by</i> DANNIE ABSE.....	77

Books and Authors:

The Unredeemed: Post-war German Writing, <i>by</i> THEODORE FRANKEL.....	78
History Without Homily, <i>by</i> MOSES HADAS.....	84
Nehru and His India, <i>by</i> LIONEL GELBER.....	86
Arab Self-Understanding, <i>by</i> WALTER Z. LAQUEUR.....	89
A Book! <i>by</i> LIONEL ABEL.....	92

Comment	95
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from the four corners

Achmed for Dinner

By CARL ALPERT

Haifa

THE presence of 5859 Egyptian prisoners of war in Israel following the Sinai campaign created a problem of major proportions. At a time when the flow of immigrants had increased because of the Hungarian and Egyptian refugees, this large number of prisoners brought new headaches to the authorities. Barracks in a long abandoned camp were reactivated, bedding was procured and the whole administrative framework of a small village was set up.

Enlisted men and officers were kept in isolation from each other, in conformity with Egyptian military procedures. Egyptian officers maintained the most rigid distinctions of rank even behind the barbed wire, and more than once they expressed amazement at the spirit of fraternity existing in the Israel army.

Approximately 200 officers—lieutenants, captains, majors and colonels, up through the general commanding Gaza, and the navy captain commanding the ill-fated Ibrahim el Awal, were in Israel's hands.

At an early stage in the three-month period of their captivity, the idea of giving some of these Egyptian prisoners an opportunity to see Israel as it really was—and not as it had been described to them in Egyptian propaganda—took shape. Many of them had been told that Haifa and Tel Aviv had been devastated by Egyptian planes, and that Egyptian troops and tanks had penetrated far into Israel and inflicted great damage. They were under the impression that Israel's morale was sagging, its people were starving and that a slight military

push was needed to precipitate the country down the road to quick disintegration. Nothing that they might be told could erase these impressions—nothing except their personal viewing of the country.

The release of prisoners of war for sight-seeing trips was something unheard of. There were many doubts to be set at rest and problems to be resolved before the plan was launched. Understandably, the military authorities had one point of view, the Foreign Ministry another. Gradually an understanding was hammered out, and it was decided to give the plan a trial.

To escort an Egyptian prisoner around the country at the point of a gun would have spoiled the spirit of the undertaking and defeated its purpose. The project had to be made as natural as possible, and it was therefore decided to invite the cooperation of private citizens to serve as informal hosts. Several trial trips were made, and each time the Egyptian officer was accompanied by an armed guard of the Israel army. Transportation was provided in the private car of the citizen. The Egyptian sat in front with the driver-host, and the soldier-escort sat in the rear, keeping a watchful eye, but otherwise taking no part in the proceedings. These first tests were successful in almost every respect, and were extended, with several substantial changes and improvements.

SUGGESTING the project to the prisoners was at first fraught with difficulties. None of them might want to do anything that could possibly be labelled as collaboration with the enemy, and might get them in trouble upon their return to Egypt. Rejection by the first candidates might set the tone and lead

to the failure of the undertaking before it had even been tested. To ask the consent of the prisoners would have been open invitation for refusal. Hence it was decided not to ask them. On the first few mornings, the candidates selected were simply summoned and told that they were going on an all-day trip. There was one prisoner indeed who weighed the situation carefully, and then asked:

"Do I have the right to refuse, or is this a military order?"

The entire venture hung in the balance. The reply was quick.

"This is a military order."

That put the situation in a different light, and the prisoner, breathing a sigh of relief, climbed into the car, and enjoyed himself for the rest of the day. There were almost no further objections. Once the first batch of prisoners brought back reports of how they had spent their day, the others were anxious for their turn. If there was to be any reaction back in Cairo, they were all in the same boat now.

As a matter of fact, none of the prisoners behaved other than as loyal Egyptian officers. None of them betrayed any military information. Some of them were friendly and even cordial, readily entering into the host-guest relationship. There was only one officer who later refused repatriation to Egypt, and his background was such that he was more Englishman than Egyptian.

On our part there was no attempt of any kind to win the minds of these men, to convince them of anything, or to argue with them; and they made no secret of their loyalty to Nasser and their respect for him. Those who spoke freely—and some spoke more freely than others—made it clear that they endorsed Nasser fully.

The initial successes encouraged the promoters of the plan to broaden its scope; more and more families were called into the picture. Each host was told that his duties were simply to entertain the prisoner-guest as if he were a tourist, to show him Israel as it

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is; to dispel any misconceptions he may have had about the country; to let him see that there was no hatred of Egypt, no desire for war; to let him realize that despite its desire for peace, Israel was not weak, and was prepared to fight for its existence. It was definitely not one of the functions of the host to obtain information, and he was enjoined not to pump or probe. The conversation was to be free, easy, natural, and could deal with political and diplomatic problems only if the guest showed an inclination to talk about these things.

The Egyptian non-coms, mostly sergeants, were also given attention, but not individually. They were taken out in groups of thirty, always with an armed guard. Some of the shiny, new, luxurious sightseeing buses, which had almost no tourists to cater to during those days, served the Egyptians, and more than one Israeli was heard to comment enviously that *he* had never been in one of these buses.

I had an opportunity to meet a considerable number of Egyptian officers, and the following stories are drawn for the most part from my personal experience with them. To simplify the telling I have in some instances telescoped events of several days and of several prisoners into one composite narration. Each day and each itinerary was different, but followed a typical pattern.

APPROXIMATELY ten officers a day were released for the tour. It was soon felt that an armed escort was unnecessary, since the project was conducted on what amounted to an honor system. In some instances the host was given two guests to escort.

There was no attempt to escape, to my knowledge. The reasons were obvious. First of all, the escapee could not have gotten very far before being apprehended. Second, so long as he was being escorted around the country, he perhaps had the idea that he could legitimately pick up some military information, which he could later report back to Cairo. Third, it was by then common

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 97)

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A Quarterly Jewish Review

The Eye of the Hurricane

NOTES IN A JEWISH KEY

By SHLOMO KATZ

EVENTS are happening quickly and dramatically in Europe, in the Middle East, in Washington, in New Delhi and in Moscow. One day it seems that the "brink" has been overstepped, the next brings a measure of relief and with it some hope—who knows, perhaps if the doom can be postponed long enough it will somehow be avoided altogether. The journalistic mills, in the meantime, grind out endless well-documented and logically constructed articles and essays to explain everything—almost everything, that is, for after the articles and the editorials and the quickly concocted books are read, there remain nagging doubts that this isn't it, that this isn't it at all, and that the underlying truth is somehow overlooked or passed over without being recognized. It may therefore be useful, perhaps, to record some emotional reactions to recent events as possibly a truer guide to an understanding of what is happening about us.

Such reactions are naturally conditioned. This is a weakness, of course, for it implies a lack of detachment. On the other hand, the very process of conditioning, suggesting as it does the

accumulated experience of events of a similar nature, may enable one to understand the contemporary scene more correctly even if only intuitively.

* * * *

HUNGARY. Its story is now well known, and the post mortems are rolling off the presses. Was there a mistake somewhere? Could Hungary have succeeded in throwing off the Russian yoke had this, that or some other policy been followed?

The debate is interesting, of course, but futile in a way. For, fundamentally, Hungary won its battle. Hungary will survive and some day it will be free, if not now, then ten or fifteen years from now. Historically this is not too important. The Hungarian people stood up for their freedom, and won it, even if Soviet tanks temporarily still clatter down the streets of Budapest.

But the Hungarian revolution has accomplished more than this limited national objective—it has also destroyed one of the great alibis of the twentieth century.

The mind flashes back to 1945 and the years that followed. Germany lay

defeated, though not penitent. In Russia Stalinism was in the saddle. Many were the apologists for both. What can one do today, they argued. You can't fight a modern dictatorship with bare fists or on barricades. Its machinery of suppression is too powerful. Only defeat in a war with a superior power can overthrow present-day totalitarianism. The German people did not like Nazism, but what could they do? They are innocent; only Hitler is to blame.

The argument was quickly extended to include Russia and other totalitarian countries. How can one fight Bolshevism and the NKVD with bare hands? How can Franco be overthrown when he has tanks?

But as the fighting raged in Budapest and the Hungarian workers went on a general strike that almost toppled the might of the infinitely superior Soviet forces, this alibi crumbled. At last it became clear beyond any doubt that the great alibi was a horrible lie. If eight million unarmed Hungarians could hold out for months against Soviet might without receiving a single gun in support, then the eighty million Germans could easily have overthrown their own dictator; there need have been no World War II; there need have been no six million butchered Jews. And the same holds true for the two hundred million Russians under Stalin or Khrushchev.

The truth is that most of the Germans wanted Hitler; most of the Russians wanted Stalin, and now want Khrushchev and Bulganin and the rest of the Stalinist crew. Something within these regimes seems to answer a basic need or desire of these people.

• • • •

How does one measure social and political climate? There is no thermometer to measure it. One must rely on intuition to a large extent. Back

in 1945 we Jews enjoyed a special status. Not in the foreign offices and embassies of the world, to be sure—these were just as hard-hearted as ever, condescendingly giving a visa to a refugee here, and voicing a pious platitude there. But the general climate of opinion accorded us, for a while, a special status, the status of an orphan. Who does not remember Sholem Aleichem's immortal Mottel, who boasts, "Boy, am I lucky, I'm an orphan!" Such, to a certain extent, was the status of all the Jews after the war. After all, six million of them had been slaughtered—the remainder deserved a little special consideration. Anti-Semitism became unfashionable. Even the safe and secure Jews in the United States who suffered not at all, except for those who lost some members of their families who didn't have the luck or the good sense to get into the U.S. before the immigration quotas were clamped down, became the beneficiaries of this attitude.

But gradually, almost imperceptibly, the attitude changed. Guilt and contrition are fine things, of course, but they have their limits. It's nice, and emotionally rewarding, to take in the orphan for a day or two, to give him an extra good meal, and perhaps a pair of cast-off shoes. In the long run, one has one's own family and the orphan becomes a nuisance.

First there were DP camps, and much sympathetic tongue-clucking over Nazi savagery, and then the world sympathized with Haganah, and some even with Irgun, and finally, when Israel was established, there was a race to recognize it, though it was left to fight alone against seven invading armies. After all, charity begins at home and one has one's own worries and interests, etc., etc.

Then the change of attitude asserted itself, not only toward Israel but toward Jews in general. The change was never

articulated. But it seemed to run somewhat as follows: We know we are guilty toward you but now we have done whatever we could. Don't press any more claims against us. We are getting a little tired of you and your troubles.

The early sympathy seemed to turn to impatience, and the impatience to deteriorate into irritation, and perhaps also into unadmitted resentment. The guilt was great—by and large the civilized world stood by while a people was being slaughtered and did nothing about it—and nothing could truly atone for it. The guilt had to be shelved because the claim was too large. This may account for the resentment. There comes to mind the remark of the elder Karamazov in Dostoyevski's famous novel, who, when asked why he especially hated a certain person, replied that he had once done him a particularly bad turn, and ever since then he could not stand him.

There was Israel, and the Moslem world rejected it. I suspect that the Christian world secretly rejected it too, despite the recognitions. It is one thing to be kind to a poor orphan once or twice; it is another thing altogether to admit him permanently as a member of the family. Jordan, Iraq, Liberia, Albania, of course. But the Jews? Whoever heard of a Jewish State except in a past so far off that it was more myth than reality!

Israel was a thorn to the powers. It was an uninvited guest who did not belong. England and France and the U.S. needed oil, and Arabia had it. Israel was ordered: Become a true Middle East country. The foreign offices can understand Lebanon and Syria and Egypt. In one form or another they "belong" in the pattern. But Israel? A maverick nation with strange messianic ambitions of solving an Exile situation, rejected by its neighbors, totally lacking in oil, and with a bothersome moral

claim into the bargain. The powers had no formula for such a case. It was disturbing. It was not part of the political game as the world knew it. In the end irritation often gave way to anger. Do Washington or London or Moscow *want* to "sell out" Israel? Not at all. If they could fit it into some conventional pigeonhole of their power politics they would gladly do so, no doubt. But Israel does not fit.

* * * *

FROM far off childhood days there comes to mind a song made popular in Russia around 1919 by some itinerant Yiddish troupe. I recall the first line only: "The world needs a sacrifice." Brought up in the traditional way, I knew from my Bible all about sacrifices, and I also knew that for nearly two thousand years there had been none. It made sense. Sacrifices are essential. For many centuries there had been none. Hence the troubles of the world.

It may sound mystical, but for a long time the Jews seem to have played the role of the Western world's burnt offering. Now the pattern threatens to be repeated again. Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Arabia—countries that gained their independence without striking a blow—seem to look for a burnt offering to sanctify their emergence into nationhood. And Israel is at hand.

The liberal part of the Christian world often needed the Jew also to protest discrimination and injustice and was somewhat shocked at the new version of the Jew in Israel who does not seek condescending sympathy. More than one Gentile pro-Zionist turned anti-Zionist after Israel came into being. The atonement sacrifice who used to be so grateful for the fine speech at a protest meeting on his behalf has suddenly come into his own—is that possible?

WALAD IL MUT, Children of Death, Arabs used to call the Jews in their midst, those humble, beaten, fearful Jews in Yemen, Damascus, Old Jerusalem who docilely stepped off the sidewalk every time an Arab approached, —children of death who live or die whenever it suits the mob, or its rulers.

Children of Death, the Nazis gloated. A handful of German soldiers can herd a thousand of them to their death without fear of resistance.

Cowards, the Russians used to sneer at the Jews—they are afraid to fight.

Jews avoid contact sports, an American university coach recently proclaimed with contempt.

But now a new Jewish type has been raised in Israel who refuses humbly to step off the sidewalk every time an Arab passes and fights against attempts to destroy him. What is more, he fights competently. One might have expected the chivalrous world, which so admires the rules of the ring, to applaud. Instead the cry has gone out: Aggression! Bulganin, Nasser, Dulles, Nehru, British Laborites, all, all repeat the same cry: Aggression! Get off the international sidewalk! Become *Walad il Mut* again, then we will love you.

It is irrelevant at this point to discuss which role is morally superior, that of the humble servant who takes his undeserved punishment without resisting, or that of the man who claims his elementary rights with force if necessary. What is important is the fact that a separate and distinct standard is applied to Jews, almost as if they belonged to another species.

Terrible words were pronounced last November during the fighting in Sinai. Bulganin, Russia's Prime Minister, broached the possibility of the destruction of Israel as a state. Of course, the Arab countries had been openly threatening the same for the past ten years, but when this suggestion came from

Moscow, the chill of a terror consciously or unconsciously familiar to the Jew tingled in many a spine. The threats of the Arab rulers can perhaps be shrugged off as the mouthings of irresponsibles whom the world does not take too seriously—though their capacity for inflicting hurt should not be overlooked. But when the head of the Soviet state spoke, it was a different matter.

It is not important in this context that Bulganin is the head of a totalitarian dictatorship. The Soviet Union is at odds with many nations yet never, not even when it was fighting for its own life against the German invaders, did the Soviet rulers say that Germany must cease to be a state. Soviet Russia absorbed many countries. Independent Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania were done away with as sovereign states, but even in their case the Soviet rulers, officially at least, did not dare say that they must cease to exist. These countries became Soviet Republics. Only in the case of Israel did Soviet Russia plainly state that that nation can and may cease to exist.

One might have expected a great outcry against this genocidal suggestion. One might have expected that President Eisenhower would write another of his letters to Marshal Zhukov and inform him bluntly that in 1956 there could be no talk of a nation's ceasing to exist, which in plain language meant destroying a nation.

But not a sound of protest came from any of the capitals. A right that is taken for granted for Liberia, Nepal, Albania, Esthonia, is not one that automatically applies to Israel. The way Bulganin phrased the hint it sounded terribly coarse and no doubt caused distress to many sensitive diplomats. But the principle behind it seemed not so outrageous as to be repudiated at once and without qualifications.

VOLUMES have been written during the past year about the new phenomenon known as National Communism. As the Soviet system expanded beyond the borders of the Russian Empire, it sat uncomfortably on the new nations, and they are now racing to adapt Communism to their distinct national habits and traditions.

It is remarkable that no one has so far made a systematic study of national anti-Semitism, for it should be apparent by now that every nation has its own "national" techniques and methods in this field. Interest in this aspect of the subject was recently aroused by the report of a Canadian Jewish Communist of his talks with Khrushchev last year.

It is known for instance that anti-Semitic outbursts in Poland were never very bloodthirsty. A few hundred Jews killed perhaps—the rest was physical injury, property damage and humiliation (the notorious ghetto benches in pre-war Poland). Jews lived in Poland for one thousand years, but it took the Germans to show the Poles how really to "solve" the Jewish problem.

Germany, on the other hand, is a country famous for its national traits of discipline, efficiency and good order. No matter what happens you must not step on the grass. It is therefore not surprising that the national character asserted itself also in Germany's dealing with the Jews. Though Germans (with the aid of some Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians) exterminated six million Jews, there was only one instance when the public peace was disturbed and the grass was trampled on, metaphorically speaking. That was in November 1938. The rest of the time the "job" was done quietly, neatly, and efficiently. There was no blood on the sidewalks of German cities. The subterranean dungeons of Munich and Berlin muffled the cries of the tortured,

and those of the exterminated floated heavenward unheard in remote gas chambers.

In Russia, again, pogroms have a distinct national flavor. The Russians and the Ukrainians are neither very efficient nor systematic. They make up for these lacks by unrestrained enthusiasm. A Russian pogrom was invariably marked by drunken and often singing rioters, the shrieks of the victims, blood and bodies in the streets, shattered glass littering the sidewalks, feathers flying, looters hauling their plunder gaily and without concern. Whereas in Germany "philosophers" labored long and hard to develop complicated theories about German superiority and Jewish inferiority, in Russia the slogan was direct and simple: *Bey Zhidov Spasay Rossiyu*—beat the Jews and save Russia!

The interview of J. B. Salsberg, for many years a member of the National Committee of the Marxist Canadian Labor-Progressive Party, with Khrushchev proved at least one thing, that the Russian "national character," in matters of anti-Semitism at least, has not been changed by forty years of Soviet rule. Khrushchev spoke in the national vein, like an old-fashioned Ukrainian anti-Semite of Czarist days. He spoke to a fellow-Marxist, frankly and without theoretical hemming and hawing. He said (I am paraphrasing, but not departing from the substance and the spirit of his remarks): For one thing, Jews don't love Russia—when the Soviet Union took Bessarabia in 1940, many Jews fled to Rumania rather than become proud Soviet citizens. The Jews are also lazy and dirty—when the Red Army occupied Czernowitz in 1945 the surviving Jews did not flee this time, but they also did not clean up the rubble in the streets. Wherever a Jew settles down he immediately builds a synagogue. At the end of the war there

was some talk of settling surviving Russian Jews in the depopulated Crimea. Khrushchev together with Stalin objected to this plan because in case of another war the Jews might join with the enemy to detach the Crimea from Russia. (Nothing came of this plan, but in the meantime a number of Jewish writers and Solomon Lozovsky, for years the head of the Red Trade Union International, were executed on charges of trying to "tear the Crimea away from the USSR"—an advance payment, of some sort, on a crime that can never be committed.) In the end Khrushchev pointed out that his son is married to a Jewish woman, and warned his interviewer to be a good Jew and not to get caught in the snares of Zionism, the bourgeoisie, etc.

Khrushchev's tirade was not unexpected. The man is said to have a record of tolerating, if not instigating, pogroms in the Ukraine in 1945. What is surprising is the formulation of his sentiments, which does not vary in any particular from that of his predecessors under the Russian monarchy.

But perhaps we should not be too surprised. Many nations paid allegiance to Christianity for centuries, while retaining their pagan outlook. Why should a mere forty years of Communist slogans change Khrushchev's national outlook in such a vital matter?

• • • •

MANY hopeful illusions have had to be abandoned within the past century. In the beginning there was the claim that improved manners would solve the Jewish problem. Cast off your ridiculous garments, abandon your absurd "jargon" and learn the language of the country, adopt the good manners of your neighbors, acquire education and all persecution will cease. Thus it was argued in Eastern and Central Europe.

Then the horizons broadened and new panaceas were offered. When the nations of Europe will attain a higher standard of living, more education and greater political freedom, anti-Semitism will vanish, for is it not a mere leftover from the benighted days of medievalism? But by far the greatest hopes were placed in socialism. When exploitation is done away with, and rapacious capitalists no longer seek to divide and rule, or need a scapegoat for the accumulated wrath of the masses, then the Jewish problem will be finally solved and peace and love will reign.

The standard of living in Europe has risen for generations, and illiteracy, even in the more benighted corners of that continent, has shrunk beyond recognition. Yet here is the wonder and the horror of the situation: the three regimes that have inflicted the greatest hurt on the Jews during the past twenty years (in different degrees, to be sure, in vastly different degrees) all described themselves as socialist. Nazi Germany was *Nazional Sozialistisch*, and Soviet Russia is beyond doubt the repository of the purest socialism, and wasn't Ernest Bevin's Labor government in England a fine example of a socialist welfare state? It should be stressed again and again that one must say *lehavdil* a thousand times before mentioning Britain's Labor government in the same breath with Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, Bevin and Bevinism were there and cannot be ignored.

Are we therefore to conclude that political democracy, a high standard of living, educated—or at least literate—masses, and socialism are bad in themselves? Not at all. But it is hard to escape the conclusion that so far as the special subject under discussion here, the Jewish problem, is concerned, they are unimportant as solutions and certainly not a guarantee of a basically changed attitude.

ZIONISM, too, has unwittingly fostered at least two illusions. One was based on an old historical tradition. It went somewhat as follows: Christian Europe rejects us. It can neither assimilate and absorb us, nor is it capable or willing to grant Jews the status of a separate but equal entity. The Moslem world, however, the Arab world in particular, would be different. We are related to it. We are cousins. Isaac and Ishmael have their differences, but these are family differences. When Israel returns from its wanderings to its native land there may be some friction at first, as at the unexpected return of any long-absent member of a family. But with a little effort room will be found in the tent for the wanderer from afar.

Based on this myth the Zionist movement later fostered a second illusion that was cut straight from the cloth of prevalent progressive clichés. The Arab objection to Jewish settlement in Palestine, it was proclaimed over and over, was a result of the machinations of imperialism. It was in the interests of British imperialism to play off Arab against Jew. Once the British leave Palestine, Arab and Jew will live in peace.

It is not at all necessary to deny that British imperialism in the Middle East did in fact encourage tension between the two peoples in order to see the fallacy of the assumption that imperialism was solely responsible. The tensions were there; the hostility of the Arabs was there. The British utilized these as long as they were a factor in the Middle East. They also utilized animosities between Arab rulers.

Should we not perhaps cast off these illusions and assign to British imperialism only that blame that rightly belongs to it? Otherwise we may fail to perceive the true outlines of the situation.

These, it must be admitted, are frightening. Events in recent years lead

one to an increasingly pessimistic conclusion that the Arab world, the Moslem world (one is inclined to say the entire "Bandung" world) rejects Israel in the same way, and perhaps with the same intensity as Europe rejected the Jew.

It is a terrible conclusion, not to be easily accepted, for should it prove true it would mean that there can never be lasting peace between an independent Israel and the Arab world, that all negotiations are bound to founder on the rock of the total rejection of one by the other, that in the end only a catastrophe could resolve this unconditional rejection, just as Central and Eastern Europe after a thousand years made themselves *Judenrein* in a convulsion of savagery unequalled in history.

The king of Saudi Arabia, America's recent and much honored guest, declared not so long ago that Israel is a cancer in the Middle East and ten million Arab lives should be sacrificed, if need be, to eradicate it. Iraq, Syria, Egypt repeat this wish. Charles Malik, the cultured representative of Lebanon (himself a Christian) speaks a more refined language, but even he has yet to say unequivocally that the Sixth Commandment includes Israel. The untutored Saud of Arabia, in his pristine desert honesty may be the true spokesman for the deepest sentiments of Arabistan.

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BUT this is hysteria, some will protest. The world, despite cold war and brinksmanship and assorted aggressions, has made great progress. Now we are past the half-way mark in the twentieth century and such terrors have no foundation. There is the UN, there is the U.S., there is India, there is Western Europe. Such things—the extermination of a nation—are impossible, no matter what King Saud of Arabia says or Nas-

ser dreams or Zeineddine fulminates. This is sheer Zionist hysteria!

The term sounds familiar. We Zionists have been accused of hysteria in the past. Jews in general have been accused of hysteria, of magnifying terrors, of seeing doom around the corner. And it is true that certain things raise tidal echoes in Jewish minds. A beautiful Russian folk song, moving as no other folk song, may set off an undercurrent of apprehension and anxiety in a Jewish mind, for often this song, or one in a similar mood, recalls the violence which it accompanied. And for a generation or two to come, "*Ja, das ist ein schnitzelbank*" will be a fear-evoking formula for Jews everywhere, instead of a silly nursery rhyme.

The cry of "Zionist hysteria" was also flung at us a quarter of a century ago when European Zionists argued that Europe had become uninhabitable and Jabotinsky stormed from many a platform that a million Jews must be evacuated from Poland before it is too late. Zionism is a sick movement, the optimistic social diagnosticians then jeered. Zionists have lost confidence in the sane historical process. What if a Hitler ranted? Is it sanity to lose one's emotional equilibrium at the assaults of some corner hoodlum? There were strong democratic and socialist movements in Europe, and also in Germany. The U.S. was a great and civilized power. Asia spoke through the voice of Gandhi. It was pathological fanaticism to call for an exodus from Europe.

And even later, when Nazi Germany was already on the march and had the three million Jews of Poland at its mercy, the spokesmen for rational, balanced (non-hysterical) thinking made their weird reckonings. Germany was short of manpower, they argued. The German army needed clothing, and the Jews of Poland included many tailors, shoemakers, etc. Would even a Hitler

be so insane as to destroy the very labor power that he so badly needed?

The arguments were logical and sane and non-hysterical, but the Jews of Poland were exterminated nonetheless. The hysterical prognostications proved to be the only historically sound and balanced ones.

Today, twelve years after the end of the war, the Polish nation, twenty-two million strong, is turning viciously on the fifty thousand surviving Jews in its midst and forcing their departure.

We seem to live in an age when there is more truth in a nightmare than in a dream, more reason in hysteria than at the most solemn conference table.

* * * *

BUT why the obsession with Israel, others ask. All of humanity trembles at the edge of an atomic abyss. Giant powers wrestle with each other. One slip, one error, or one toast too many to peace, consumed in 100 proof vodka in Moscow, and civilization may go up in the smoke of the now familiar atomic mushrooms. Is this the time to be so concerned about Israel, a minute country that politically and economically weighs hardly at all in the scale of the world struggle?

This question is often asked in all seriousness and not at all cynically. The fate of the entire human race is obviously of greater importance than what befalls a small segment of it. There are greater and lesser evils, greater and lesser goods, and it is for us to choose between them. As the main counterweight to Russian totalitarianism, the apparent interests of the U. S. in the Middle East obviously seem to take precedence over Israel's rights.

Were it as simple as all this, there could be no arguing the point, for who will deny that of the three billion people in the world only one and a half million live in Israel, that Israel

has negligible resources, that it has no oil whereas Arabia has much and the West needs it, that Israel's imports and exports do not affect world trade.

But the fact is that the problem is not quantitative but qualitative. Not a country but a principle is involved—a principle affecting the whole of humanity—and the difference between insisting on the principle or ignoring it may also spell the difference between the survival of the human race or its extinction in an atomic holocaust.

It is no doubt easy to misunderstand such a point of view and to interpret it as chauvinism, egocentrism, exaggerated Jewish self-interest, or a new version of the Chosen People theory that ascribes to Israel and its survival a disproportionate importance. This would be a dangerous misunderstanding.

History has known a number of crucial turning-points. One such turning-point occurred some four thousand years ago when the human race pulled itself up by its bootstraps and assumed moral obligation for the commandment *Thou Shalt Not Kill*, thus making possible cultured social existence. The Christian world believes that another such turning-point occurred 1927 years ago and set western humanity on a new upward course. More recently a handful of people in the West, and many in the East, were convinced that a new step forward was taken as a consequence of the events in Russia in 1917. This last belief, true enough, did not outlast a generation.

Now a new darkness is threatening the world. Parts of the human race seem to have suffered a relapse in terms of the code of civilization. World War II was not just another war on a larger

scale for territory or colonies or markets. It marked a degenerative process which expressed itself in the planned mass extermination of a member people of the family of nations. It is this rather than the territorial fate of East Prussia or even the bombing of cities that singles it out of all previous wars and lends it its special malignancy.

The Jews were the chosen victims of this process and their death in extermination camps therefore had worldwide meaning and importance.

The degenerative process which affected Germany during the last war now appears to have spread to the Middle East and other areas. This time Israel the nation instead of Israel the people is its target, and its consistency in its choice of target would indicate that it is not a scattered phenomenon to be ignored. How should we define this degenerative process? It has been called Genocide, a very inadequate term, since it does not sufficiently describe the insane malignancy that underlies it.

If this is not halted in time, it will infect other areas of the world and corrode that moral resistance to dark and outlawed instincts which alone can stay the hand outstretched to press the proverbial push-button of nuclear war.

Hence the obsession with Israel; because today it has become a principle and a symbol that far outweigh immediate political and strategic calculations. A new *Thou Shalt Not*, a new taboo respecting the extermination or elimination of a nation, quickly formulated and unequivocally applied even at the sacrifice of immediate self-interest, may yet reverse the current from drift to atomic suicide to a new lease on civilized existence.

The Suez crisis of last fall is receding into history. Tensions between Washington and London are, on the surface at least, relaxing. But for England the brief and ill-starred Suez campaign appears to have marked a decisive turning-point in its history. Which roads are now open to England? Which will she choose? This problem is here discussed by GEORGE LICHTHEIM, who last appeared in these pages with his incisive study of "The Trouble in Cyprus" in our Summer 1956 issue.

The Dilemma of Britain

By GEORGE LICHTHEIM

"Life in a satellite is not very comfortable, and believe me, it will be a very much lower material standard of life than we now enjoy. It will begin with American loans, and end with contemptuous patronage and the privilege of being the first victims of the third world war" (Angus Maude, Conservative Member of Parliament, as reported by the *Manchester Guardian*, December 15, 1956).

"This loss [of Middle Eastern oil] has stripped away the tinsel with which we have garnished ten years of economic failure and economic improvidence. Britain has tried in that time to conceal the real wastage of a position of power, and of a system that only fifty years ago was almost beyond challenge in the world. The effort to keep up appearances has bankrupted many a family of ancient traditions. First the lands are mortgaged, then then servants go, and finally the roof falls in. Britain now stands somewhere between the second and third stage" (*The Financial Times*, London, December 5, 1956).

IT IS never easy to appraise the long-term significance of current events. We like to think that we are taking part in momentous happenings, when it is quite likely that history

will dismiss our pretensions in a few lines. What, for example, did the much publicized British Labor "revolution" of 1945 really amount to? In retrospect it can now be seen to have yielded little beyond the building up of an ambitious welfare edifice over shaky economic foundations. On the other hand, a seemingly trifling occurrence, such as Sir Anthony Eden's sudden flight to Jamaica at the height of the Suez crisis last winter, can have momentous consequences because it epitomizes the failure not only of a policy but of a governing class. Coming on top of an unparalleled politico-economic disaster, this particular incident symbolized a national humiliation of which the average British citizen was not the less conscious because he preferred not to discuss it aloud.

The "decline and fall" theme has thus been given flesh in Britain today, and, from being the hobby of the intellectuals, has become the property of all the politically conscious—though the general public remains refractory to its more sinister implications. In seeking to escape from it, one can get little help from the traditional devotees of the imperial myth, who might be expected to offer the most strenuous resistance. On the contrary, it is they who sound

the note of despair, as witness the first of the two quotations at the beginning of this article. To the genuine Conservative for whom Toryism means faith in the enduring greatness of the British Empire, the recent fall from eminence appears both catastrophic and irrevocable. It also appears shameful insofar as it is due to the inadequacy of formerly trusted leaders who are now revealed in all their helplessness—Sir Anthony Eden above all. Nowhere has Churchill's luckless successor been judged more harshly than among the unbending Tories to whom "the Empire" means more than an agglomeration of territories, the "British way of life" more than a phrase. To them—though they will rarely admit it publicly—what has happened is tantamount to national abdication from greatness.

If some chafe against having to witness this intolerable spectacle, others—the more cynical as well as the more philosophical—are turning their backs on the dream of imperial grandeur in a world dominated by the true colossi. But they are doing so in a mood of contemptuous self-laceration, and with no thought of sparing the feelings of the loyal remnant who still hope for national revival.

"In the twilight of expiring imperial systems, deluded figures like Sir Anthony Eden are liable to rush frenziedly into the center of the stage and begin declaiming lines belonging to a play on which the curtain has already fallen. They may be sure of the wild applause of those who share their illusions, but the outcome of their efforts cannot be but a total fiasco. Whatever may or may not be expected of us here on earth, we are under the inescapable necessity of taking our allotted parts in the drama of our own times. We may dream, but we cannot live, in the past or in the future."

Thus Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge in the *New Statesman* (December 8, 1956), and Mr. Muggeridge, although an occasional contributor to the weekly organ of the liberal intelligentsia, is basically a man of the Right, in politics and in morals. He speaks for those disenchanted Tories who had vainly looked for national revival under Churchill and Eden, and who are not taken in by Mr. Harold Macmillan's unconvincing attempts to present a bold face to the world. Their condition carries consequences not yet measurable, but likely to be permanent when the full meaning of recent events has come home to the electorate which supports them.

CLEARLY this is not a party matter. The emotional hurt is felt by all, as are the economic consequences of lessening international power. But the impact of defeat in an anachronistic attempt to recapture great power status in the Middle East is experienced differently by those who had fewer illusions (or illusions of a different kind—about the United Nations, for example). That is why in dealing briefly with the now fashionable theme of "decline and fall" it is appropriate to note the emotions of the genuine Tories; for true Toryism is worlds apart from ordinary middle-class Conservatism. It is imperialist or nothing, and its theme is not "normalcy" but greatness, imperial greatness at any cost and against all comers: Germans, Russians, Americans, Afro-Asians, anyone who challenges the British Empire. A faded dream? No doubt, but as late as 1940 it was instrumental in rallying the country against Hitler. Now that the time for such heroics has gone, it is worth recalling the last occasion when there was still some genuine grandeur in it.

To the dominant forces in post-war Britain—Conservative or Laborite—romantic imperialism of the Churchill-

ian kind makes little appeal, though traces of nostalgia for it are occasionally displayed even by some of Mr. Gaitskell's followers. Neither of the two great parties has as yet really adapted itself to the realities of the post-war world, but each in its own way is trying to shake off the heritage of the past. Old-style Toryism does not dominate the Conservative party any more than old-style socialism governs the activities of the Labor leadership. Toryism is the emotional creed that links the middle-class electorate—and a sizable part of the working class—to the leaders of industry and finance who control the Conservative party, much as socialism binds the masses of organized labor to the trade-union bosses and their political allies. But Toryism and socialism are ideologies, not recipes for governing; broad statements of aim, not blueprints for action. Obeisance can be rendered to these deities, more or less sincerely, without committing the party leaders to anything in particular. Only if the discrepancy between professed aim and actual achievement becomes too glaring is the public shaken out of its habitual semi-torpor into an uneasy awareness that something has gone wrong. And since at the moment it is the Conservatives who are in office, it is they who are having to cope with the muttered resentment of an electorate which finds itself cheated of its hopes for stable prosperity and enhanced national self-esteem.

The immediate focus of this unrest is the aftermath of the Suez adventure which, to quote the independent Sunday newspaper, *The Observer* (December 9, 1956), "has shown that Britain has not got the resources to act as a Great Power in her own right, even in a traditional sphere of British interest. The complaints that we were frustrated by the Americans only prove the point that, where Great Power politics are

concerned, we are dependent on America. We cannot assure our vital oil supplies by our own unaided efforts." The significance of this last point has now been brought home unmistakably to every family in the land, but the petrol shortage is particularly felt by the car-owning middle class which represents the hard core of Conservatism. By contrast, the average member of the professional class, who anyhow cannot afford a car (but can and does read the liberal weeklies, including *The Observer* with its circulation of 600,000), is more concerned with the affront offered to international law and the United Nations than with the political after-effects of Suez. These cross-currents must be borne in mind if one is to make sense of the apparent schizophrenia which has overtaken the vocal part of the British public since last winter's disasters: liberal and puritan indignation with Eden was at first limited to a section of the intelligentsia, but through it has spread to the professional class, including the huge number of underpaid civil servants, school teachers and the like. It is these groups who are likely to tilt the balance at the next election. Businessmen and farmers will, as before, vote Conservative, though with less enthusiasm. What has gone down the drain is not the voting strength of the Conservative party, somewhat lessened though it is, but its ability to inspire the country's youth with a party-colored image of Britain's splendid past and future. The present is too grey for that, and as Mr. Muggeridge rightly observes, we all have to live in the present.

BUT if Britain is no longer great, what are its leaders to tell the rising generation on whom the Suez crisis—coming on top of the Hungarian drama—has had the effect of an eye-opener? Here the views diverge accord-

ing to party. While the Tory die-hards retire into embittered isolation, and official Conservatism tries to pretend that nothing has happened, the Left once more sees a chance of gaining the ascendancy by putting forward its alternative to imperialism: world citizenship and acceptance of reduced power in an arena where Britain may still try to exert leadership, through the Commonwealth, by setting an example to the lesser breeds. As a first step, the fiction of equality with the super-empires has to be abandoned:

"This reduction of Britain to the ranks of the secondary powers has been evident for a long time—at least since the end of World War II. It was implicit in the story of Teheran and Yalta, of Churchill's vain struggle to keep the dividing line of Europe further East, in our renunciation of sole control of the Ruhr . . . in our handing over to the Americans our responsibility in Greece, in the Abadan fiasco" (*The Observer*, December 9, 1956).

One may indeed ask why this admission has only been made since the Suez affair. Part of the answer no doubt lies with the now shattered belief that Britain's loss of power could be successfully masked by encouraging the fiction of an "Anglo-American alliance" of equals or near-equals. It was the collapse of this illusion, under the stress of public championship of Colonel Nasser by the White House, that has now driven the erstwhile spokesmen of the Anglo-American myth onto more solid ground: in future all is to be staked on Commonwealth unity and on Britain's ability to function as a link between Europe and the emergent Afro-Asian states. "With these assets, we were an indispensable mediator between the free nations of the West and those of Asia, a magnet of cohesion in an all

too divided world; without them we should be no more than a little island in the North Sea, hanging on to its rapidly dwindling colonies" (*loc. cit.*). To which is added the rather strained afterthought that Britain's future lies "not in obstructing but in promoting" closer links between the Commonwealth and Europe. But not, be it noted, in merging the United Kingdom with the countries of Continental Europe. Not even a liberal journal dare as yet advocate anything so drastic, for to do so would, it seems, be tantamount to admitting that this country's status is that of "a little island in the North Sea." And so the pretence that Britain, even in its present reduced state, is still something grander than France (a larger country, with greater potential riches and a far bigger African hinterland) must be maintained even by the Labor-Liberal opposition which otherwise dissociates itself from what it regards (rightly) as outmoded Tory imperialism. So difficult is it for people to renounce any part of their cherished national heritage. "Cooperation" with Europe, by all means, but union—heaven forbid! At bottom the average Liberal-Laborite is still wedded to Eden's old formula that Britain stands at the intersection of "three circles": the Commonwealth, Europe and the nations of the Atlantic Community. Indeed there is on this point scarcely any distinction between the Conservatives and the Labor leadership. Whatever else they may differ on, Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Gaitskell are at one in their resolve not to relinquish this unique claim.

The belief that Britain's status in the modern world hinges on her ability to maintain this posture "at the intersection of the three circles" has since the war played a crucial role in determining British policy and in guiding the long-range thinking of the country's

elite—political, financial, intellectual. Unlike the Tory myth of empire, which is no longer taken seriously by the dominant forces in British society, it has become part of the unspoken credo of the ruling class. As a formula it has its uses. The trouble is that, in order to bring it to life, a far greater effort was required from the nation than it has been willing to make, and not least in the sphere of economics. To put it at its lowest, Britain would have had to produce a much bigger surplus of capital to make the "three circles" formula attractive to the Asian and African members of the Commonwealth. Instead London has been leaning on the Commonwealth for support, while quietly sabotaging Western Europe's efforts at integration. Some of these chickens have lately come home to roost; others are still on the wing. It is apparent now that even the present Conservative government will have to move closer to Europe, if only to prevent Europe from erecting economic barriers against Britain. But such a policy, however necessary, endangers the myth of the "three circles" on which British self-confidence has largely rested since 1945. It is therefore difficult to dramatize. The British may be about to take a large step towards becoming Europeans, but they do not like the thought and will not thank anyone for encouraging them along this path—least of all the Americans. For it is the conviction of the London policy-makers that the whole disaster would not have occurred if Washington had done its duty by its principal ally. Well-founded or not, this belief plays its part in making London just now a somewhat depressing place to live in.

AT BOTTOM, however, this depression of the spirit feeds not on resentments, but on something a good deal more tangible: the state of the country's

economic health. Of the two quotations at the beginning of this article, the one from the *Financial Times* is probably the more significant. There is no trace of Tory romanticism in this influential journal, though its allegiance to the Conservative cause is unshakable. Nor are its editors inclined to mince their words:

"This is after all the most serious economic crisis Britain has had to face for many years. It is the end of the road we have gone along since the war, what Sir Stafford Cripps rightly called 'a series of expedients leading to a series of crises.' We face the temporary loss of the basis of our industrial growth—Middle Eastern oil. When the supply is restored the position will not be what it is now, or what it was six months ago. There is no status quo to which we can or shall return (December 5, 1956)."

How unsatisfactory the basic position already was before the Suez fiasco threw all expansion plans into the waste basket can be seen by glancing at the Economic Commission for Europe's 1955 report. The Commission estimated that net investment in Britain made up 6 percent of the national income in 1954, the same as in Belgium and less than in any other European country. (The Norwegian figure was 22 percent, the West German 15 percent and even such poverty-stricken countries as Greece and Turkey achieved 10 and 9 percent respectively.) From a comparison of the records since 1951 it is evident that measured in terms of Western European growth Britain has become a stagnant economy. Up to 1951, when Labor was in office and there was more planned investment and "austerity"—though not enough—the record was not too bad: Britain had done as well as Italy and the Netherlands, less well than Sweden (which did not suffer

during the war), and better than the rest. Since it had not been occupied, Britain should have done much better, and the subsequent growth of German production shows that even the relatively satisfactory position up to 1951 was nothing to be proud of. The post-1951 picture is even less reassuring. While 1955 was a boom year, it brought no improvement in the relative situation, nor has the past year. Although there had been some transfer from consumption to productive investment, capital accumulation continued to be lower, percentage-wise, than in most European countries, while an undue proportion of the national income was wasted on a huge defense budget whose political justification is beginning to look more than questionable, and which, it seems, is now at last going to be drastically cut.

The attempt to maintain the traditional great power posture has thus proved excessively costly, and since all this outlay has not even secured unimpeded access to Middle Eastern oil, the whole post-war effort begins to wear an anachronistic look. What is the good of spending 10 percent of the total national income on arms if in a crisis a petty Middle Eastern dictator can block the Suez Canal and get away with it? Nor is defense the only luxury to which successive governments have committed the country. Both under Labor and Conservative regimes—but even more under the Conservatives, strange though it seems—the national budget has been used for vote-catching purposes, so that since 1951 out of an increase in production of £1,650 millions (at 1948 prices) more than three-quarters was swallowed up by additional consumption and consumer-goods investments. In the four years after the Conservatives—supposedly the party of capital—took over in 1951, productive investment rose by the ludicrous figure of £70

million, and the more recent improvement in this respect is still trifling. No wonder German output and German exports are now the envy of every British economist and the German gold-and-dollar reserve is more than double Britain's. Well might the *Financial Times* last December warn of serious trouble ahead.

And the cause? Faulty economic policies, no doubt, furthered by Labor and Conservative governments alike. But underlying them, a basic failure to confront the realities of the post-war world. It has become a common saying that the Germans benefited from the knowledge that they had lost the war and had to start from scratch. No such spur was applied to British post-war reconstruction, with the result that available resources were frittered away in useless expenditure and a premature yielding to the cry for higher living standards. As late as last year a Conservative Chancellor held out the prospect of a rapid rise in the national income, while a nominally socialist economist (Mr. Anthony Crosland) abetted him with a confident forecast of unhampered economic growth. The public has been lulled to sleep, and the current awakening is the more painful for having been preceded by a prolonged opium dream. Whether the reaction will be of a kind to remove the obstacles to national progress, once the immediate post-Suez trouble is over, is the only question that should now be worrying the nation's leaders. Perhaps it does; so far they give few signs of it.

IT is against this background of delusions of grandeur plus economic failure that the imbecile conduct of British foreign policy in the Middle East has to be seen if the present debacle is to be properly understood.

After 1945 it was obvious that the Western powers would have to reckon

with a revival of the traditional Russian drive to gain access to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean. It was likewise evident that the internal condition of most Middle Eastern countries—Turkey being the obvious exception—did not permit the emergence of stable governments. This made it difficult even for Labor supporters to argue that British policy should be modeled on the example set by the withdrawal from India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. In principle, however, it was assumed after 1945 that a withdrawal would at least be carried out from Egypt, with the proviso that Egypt should at the same time become a partner to a British-sponsored pact system directed against Russia. When this policy was seen to fail because Egyptian nationalism was in no mood to accept British political control, interest shifted to Iraq, where the ruling oligarchy seemed better able to keep nationalist movements in check. In practice British policy became pro-Iraq, especially after the Conservatives had returned to office in 1951, and this entailed a measure of resistance to Egyptian-led Pan-Arabism. The Egyptian military base was, however, considered essential by the Chiefs of Staff, not only for the security of communications through the Suez Canal, but also for supporting the British oil interests in Iraq and the Persian Gulf: Jordan, with its RAF bases and its British-officered Arab Legion being the link between Egypt and the Gulf protectorates. The British withdrawal from Palestine in 1948 enhanced the strategic significance of Egypt, since contact with Jordan through Aqaba depended on security of passage between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. All the post-1945 negotiations between London and Cairo pivoted upon Egypt's readiness to acknowledge this state of affairs by prolonging the treaty authorizing British forces to remain in the Canal

Zone. It was therefore extremely awkward for Britain that Egypt—before and after Farouk's fall—demanded the withdrawal of the British forces and eventually began to follow up this demand with an officially sponsored guerilla campaign.

None of this fell under the heading of "colonialism"—unless the same term is to be applied to the stationing, under treaty, of American forces in Japan, or the construction of American air bases in Turkey, Saudi Arabia and North Africa. The British were, however, hampered by popular animosities built up during the sixty years of their military presence in Egypt, and they suffered the additional handicap of being committed to the support of unpopular oligarchic regimes throughout the Middle East. America, by contrast, remained on the fringe of Middle Eastern politics and made no attempt to underwrite the British security system in the area. The dominant factor in Washington's policy throughout this period was the Saudian connection—both for economic and strategic reasons. Since Saudi Arabia was the enemy of Iraq and the ally of Egypt, American diplomacy favored Cairo rather than Baghdad in the rivalry between these two centers for leadership of the Arab world. This alignment gave American diplomacy some useful leverage in Cairo, while it naturally reduced Washington's interest in the Baghdad Pact—at any rate so long as Britain could be induced to bolster this shaky structure and thus attract further political odium.

Perhaps the only theme on which America and Britain were in agreement from 1952 onwards—i.e., after Republican rule in Washington had matched Conservative rule in London—was a tacit refusal to support Israel, regarded in both capitals as an infernal nuisance, since it was thought to spoil the otherwise excellent prospect of better rela-

tions with the Arab world. Outside this area there was no common Anglo-American policy, if only because Saud-ian hostility to the British protectorates in southern and eastern Arabia discouraged Washington from underwriting the British system.

THIS complex pattern of mutual rival-ries and disharmonies was disrupted when Egypt, and then Syria, turned to Russia for armed support against Israel, and it has now fallen into complete disarray, since the British system itself has collapsed and its remaining fragments are being incorporated in the new American system at present in process of construction from Morocco to Pakistan. Since in effect the United States has come to replace Britain (after having materially assisted in the expulsion of the British from the area), it is not surprising that the British government and public resented the high-minded sermons to which they were subjected by American officials who seemed to think in all seriousness that it was open to the United States to champion Arab nationalism against "foreign domination," while at the same time extending the Truman doctrine to the whole Middle East. Yet in principle such an American commitment has been the aim of British policy since 1945, and had it not been for Whitehall's obsession with the idea of playing the senior role in the Middle East, the transfer of responsibility could have been managed without the final shattering loss of prestige entailed by the Suez fiasco. It was only necessary to drop the pretension that Britain was still the paramount power in the area, and that America's role should be to underwrite this claim. This notion should have been quietly buried at the very latest after the Abadan fiasco in 1951, which showed that America was not prepared to bolster British interests if that meant

conflicting with local nationalist aspirations. Yet the policy of trying to involve both Egypt and Iraq in treaty commitments with Britain was stubbornly pursued, in the teeth of violent Egyptian attacks on all British interests in the area, down to the day when Colonel Nasser dropped all pretense and seized the Suez Canal. Only then was it realized in Whitehall that the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1954, under which Britain was permitted to "reactivate" the Suez base in certain circumstances, was worthless—as Conservative critics of the Eden government had always said it was.

THE belated and half-hearted official acceptance of the right-wing Tories' assessment of the situation last summer and autumn did not, however, mean that a workable substitute for the previous policy had been discovered, for in practice neither the government's approach nor that of the right-wing "Suez group" offered any hope of recovering the lost position. The government, by its 1954 treaty with Egypt, had fatuously gambled on its ability to turn Colonel Nasser into an ally, by *inter alia* carefully refraining from any action likely to benefit Israel. At the same time, instead of treating the evacuation of the Suez base as the signal for a general withdrawal from all political commitments in the Middle East, it recklessly embarked on a policy of building up the Baghdad Pact alliance of Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, thus challenging the Soviet Union in the most direct and open manner—and this although the United States refused to join the Pact. How Britain unaided was to give any effective military or economic support to the Pact members, nobody in Whitehall was able to explain—or willing to discuss. The unspoken assumption was that eventually Washington would have to reinforce

the structure, thus confirming the continuance of the British system. Once more the imperial tradition stood in the way of a realistic assessment of the British position. Those who tried to discover some coherent thinking behind this tangle of contradictions were in the end confronted with nothing more inspiring than a determination to muddle through.

The withdrawal from Suez in June 1956 was a gamble on the hope that relations with Egypt would improve. When, instead, Colonel Nasser did what anyone might have foreseen and seized the Suez Canal, Sir Anthony Eden's policy fell in ruins. His only hope of recovering his personal position now lay in adopting the alternative course pressed upon him by the right-wing Tories. But in order to carry it through he would have needed the iron resolve of his predecessor at the height of his (and Britain's) war-time power. Sir Winston Churchill, who in 1944 intervened in the Greek Civil War despite snarls from the Soviet and American resistance, might have carried the anti-Nasser policy to the point of forcing a showdown between Washington and Moscow that did not involve the previous disappearance of Britain from the area. His successor only managed to destroy the remnants of the British system, after having outraged half the British public by undertaking a military invasion of Egypt in defiance of the United Nations Charter. He did not even recover the confidence of his Tory followers. After a brief week of exultation, the Conservatives were compelled to register the final failure of their hopes. From that moment it was clearly impossible for Eden to continue as Prime Minister. But Macmillan's emergence has changed nothing. The basic dilemma remains.

The seizure of the Suez Canal last summer by an openly hostile Egyptian

dictatorship was a serious challenge, to which neither party in Britain offered a constructive answer. The Left clung to the hope of appeasing Colonel Nasser, ignoring the semi-fascist character of his regime and his openly expressed intention of destroying all British interests in the Middle East. The Right banked on gunboat diplomacy in alliance with France, indifferent to the danger of Soviet intervention and trusting to luck to overcome or sidestep American obstruction. By briefly adopting the policy of the Right, and then abandoning the whole enterprise at the critical moment, the Eden government served notice that Britain was unable to play the role of paramount power to which ten years of post-war diplomacy had committed successive British governments. It also revealed its inability to involve the United States in a common Western policy. The subsequent evolution of a new American system implying a degree of political control over the entire Middle East thus took place on the ruins of the British structure and after Pan-Arabism had won a resounding propaganda victory in alliance with Moscow. With the retreat from Port Said last December, Britain once and for all ceased to be a great power in the Middle East, while by the same token America became the heir to the British imperial system. It was with a clear realization of this change that a distinguished British commentator dispassionately summed up the meaning of events: "The British have been defeated, and they must bear the consequences of their failure. The Americans have been victorious, and they must bear the consequences of that, too."

A NATION which loses its former commanding position does not for that reason immediately cease to behave in the old lordly manner. Least

of all is this to be expected of the British, who still have many titles to preeminence, including a remarkable record of achievement in the scientific and technological fields and a degree of social cohesion which is the envy of most European countries. Nevertheless, the recent debacle in a region where Britain had long been the paramount power and enjoyed special advantages of local expertise and control has confronted most thinking people with the question of whether the United Kingdom is now irretrievably launched on a downhill slope. The fear that this may be so is today sufficiently pronounced to evoke angry disclaimers—always a bad sign. It is likewise undeniable that a somewhat hollow note has crept into the self-congratulatory pronouncements of the country's political and industrial leaders. There is a tendency to harp on past triumphs—some quite recent, including a few outstanding technical achievements—while overlooking the very large and glaring weaknesses in the national structure.

Nor is the current mood of the intelligentsia altogether reassuring: too many of the country's more promising young writers seem engaged in a weary deflation of yesterday's humanist and democratic values, and what appears in their place is usually nothing more exciting than a cheerless acceptance of the doctrine that this is a pretty tough world and that everything in it is a necessary evil. The rather curious outburst of self-flagellation in connection with Suez likewise suggested a certain failure of nerve. The London literary intelligentsia, at any rate, gave the impression of preferring Colonel Nasser to Britain's own leaders—an odd choice.

Nonetheless one hesitates to employ such terms as "decline" and "fall" in dealing with a situation that includes so many variables. The British have bounced back before and they may be

capable of doing so again. Whether they get the opportunity seems to depend on social arrangements rather than on those ineluctable historical laws of which we used to hear so much in the days when determinism was more widespread than it is now. The most one can say is that a fresh release of energy seems unlikely without some major structural changes and a corresponding alteration in certain ingrained attitudes. Of these the national superiority complex with regard to lesser breeds ("The niggers begin at Calais") is the best known and certainly not the least harmful. It is, however, a good deal less pronounced than it was before the war, and may indeed be said to have disappeared entirely among the intelligent minority which sets the tone for the rest of society. As Britain willy-nilly draws closer to Continental Europe, national exclusiveness and provincialism are likely to undergo a gradual erosion. They are in any case not markedly stronger than in some other European countries.

Of greater importance in blocking a genuine change in the national outlook is the apparent unwillingness of the country's elite to accept Britain's true place in the world as a power of the second rank which, even in collaboration with the Commonwealth, cannot function as a "third" system alongside America and Continental Europe. The obstinate attachment to this notion that the Commonwealth and the sterling area somehow constitute a world-wide community obeying special gravitational pulls is by no means confined to Conservatives; it is just as passionately maintained by nearly all liberals and socialists in the British Isles. Again and again one hears the proposition "If we have to make a choice between Europe and the Commonwealth, we shall choose the Commonwealth," i.e., the remainder of the English-speaking world outside America.

Yet the belief in the existence of such an alternative is wholly delusional: the Commonwealth countries have for years made it plain that they are not in the least opposed to closer links between Britain and the rest of Western Europe. Resistance to gradual integration within a European economic union (to be followed in due course by a political and cultural union) arises not from Commonwealth obstacles, but from an obstinate refusal on the part of almost all groups, classes and schools of thought to relinquish the myth of Britain's providential role as the center of the "three circles." Behind this refusal there lies the irrational but very powerful fear of "sinking to the level of Holland or Sweden." Considering the boredom which most travelers report from Sweden, and which some shrewd observers regard as a consequence of that nation's gradual decline from its ancient European eminence, one cannot altogether blame the British for fearing a like fate. The fact remains that they do not improve their prospects by clinging to the symbols of past greatness.

OF THESE symbols, the Crown is not the least important, and the exaggerated deference paid to it in recent years—so unlike the robust indifference to royalty displayed by the British during the self-confident Victorian age, when the Queen was frequently exposed to music-hall ribaldry—is among the least healthy manifestations of the national spirit in the post-war years. In contrast to the matter-of-fact treatment of monarchical institutions in Holland and Scandinavia, the British attitude to royalty has since the war acquired a note of exaltation which is beginning to alarm even native-born traditionalists, to say nothing of foreign-born onlookers made uncomfort-

table by all this outpouring of emotion upon a symbol of the nation's continuity in time. Symbols are important, and continuity is a safeguard against disturbances of the kind through which Germany has passed in our lifetime, but one can get too much of symbolism and ancestor-worship. Also there is no doubt that the Crown, by institutionalizing the most conservative values of a profoundly conservative country, acts as a barrier against changes in attitude among all classes in society that are needed to make Britain more democratic—and more efficient. The traditional social pyramid finds its ultimate sanction in the monarchy, and while this does not matter much in terms of political power, it matters a great deal in terms of how individuals, groups and entire classes react on each other.

In a country so slow to alter the texture of its inherited institutions and so prone to seek solace in traditional symbols, a setback on the scale of the recent Middle East debacle can have consequences dangerous to the national welfare. The injury to self-confidence may intensify the habit of looking backward, of turning away from the problems of the real world, of retiring into insularity and the cultivation of a crotchety sense of independence. It has already provoked some bitterness and resentment. Yet the slow processes of national thought may also in the long run meander down the right path, once the notion has been firmly grasped that the days of imperial grandeur are over and that salvation lies in working with others rather than in trying to perpetuate a perilous stance on the razor's edge between two worlds. The British, in short, may yet decide to become Europeans, as the Germans, the French and the Italians seem tacitly to have done. One must hope that they will not delay too long.

Seth At Nine Hundred

By LEO HABER

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son, and called his name Seth, for God (said she) hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. And to Seth . . . there was born a son; . . . then began men to call upon the name of the Lord. . . . And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died. (*Genesis* IV, 25-26; V,8) (Seth is the ancestor of the Israelites.)

“WHAT did you do for women?” some ask.
“What *can* you do?” others say, twitting
an old man (may they be cursed!) with young words.
“Adam and your bold brothers were the first men;
where were the girls?” they inquire,
not a hundred but a thousand times.
Is this the new way to speak to their sire,
little snips and strumpets who say
they are great grandchildren of my great grandsons?
Life runs too long and I have lost track
of my descendants. They are young, strong, and
brazen; my body is tossed and spoiled with pain.

And now they would impute to me the moral wrong.
They would bed me with Mother Eve!
Whispering, giggling, they’ve all but forgotten Cain.
Honor is fled, faith is slain; and they refuse to
conceive of alternatives. “You can only choose
cousins to wed,” I say to them in debate, “while I
had traffic with great goddesses!” And they laugh
and they scoff, as if the God who made Eve from
Adam’s rib could not possibly contrive for me
a more divine mate!

They mumble behind doorways.
And I, who taught them to praise God aloud, who
did not sin with proud Adam nor did kill with Cain,
I must still suffer a seared, abhorred old age.
Justice, my Lord? What good is a mere pledge to me
of a nobler race of descendants? What use,—
if I, who saw not Eden in the grace of my youth,
but was doomed as no other man to hear of its enchantments
from Father Adam himself by day and by night;—
if I see not a piece of Eden in my millennial year,
my back broken, my beard gray, and
my hair fleeced white?

Hardly any literate adult American has not at some time in his life bought, read, or been influenced by the world's great literature in the form of the little five- and ten-cent booklets published in Girard, Kansas, by E. Haldeman-Julius under the imprint of "Little Blue Books." It is strange now to realize that this pioneering venture in the mass production and distribution of literature, progenitor of the entire "paperback" industry, was not sponsored by American business enterprise but by a zealous socialist freethinker. HARRY L. GOLDEN here tells the remarkable story of Haldeman-Julius, Jewish radical from Philadelphia, and his fortunes in the heart of midwest America—and at the center of American cultural aspirations. Mr. Golden will be remembered by our readers for his article in the Autumn 1956 number entitled "Unease in Dixie."

Haldeman-Julius — The Success That Failed

By HARRY L. GOLDEN

FIVE years have passed since E. Haldeman-Julius drowned in a pool on his farm at Girard, Kansas, ending the life of one of the most interesting Americans of our generation.

Publisher of the famous "Little Blue Books," Haldeman-Julius was the champion of the unorthodox and almost singlehandedly made it possible for the works of many of the dissenters and non-conformists of our era to reach the great mass of American readers. He also edited a personal journal, *The American Freeman*, which he filled each month with autobiographical sketches and his views on religion, sex, science, love, politics, criticism and the "art of living." He had purchased many of my pieces for reprint in his journal; but more important, we became "pen-pals," and this article is based on our correspondence during the last two years of his life.

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius considered himself the rightful heir to the mantle of the 19th-century atheist-orator, Col. Robert Ingersoll—a mantle which he conceded had previously fallen upon the shoulders of Clarence Darrow. Emanuel spent thirty-five years fighting what he called the "obscurantism and superstition" of religious "cults" and "sects"; but in the process succeeded in creating a "cult" of his own, a sort of "religion of irreligion," not lacking in the proselytizing fervor and righteous wrath of the tent-evangelist who was his particular target. There was an "Index," too, with one book on the list—the Bible. "It's not even good literature," Haldeman-Julius warned his readers.

Indeed for many of his readers and subscribers, Girard, Kansas, became Jerusalem, Mecca, The Ganges. With unconcealed delight, Haldeman-Julius would tell of the guest who had driven

one hundred and sixty miles to spend a few hours with him at the farm. Each visitor subsequently became the subject of a paragraph in *The American Freeman*, in which Emanuel repeated the "lecture" he had delivered on the occasion. Many others—writers, actors, artists and intellectuals—made a detour at Girard on trips across the continent. Some came out of curiosity. Bryan's daughter, Mrs. Ruth Bryan Rhode, reported that the Sunday dinner with the Haldeman-Juliuses had been excellent, and the "lecture" by the host "stimulating."

On the other hand, there were others among his followers who asked the Girard editor to map out a summer itinerary, so they could use their two or three weeks of vacation for a trip "around the circuit," shaking hands with other readers of the Haldeman-Julius publications. If your name appeared in the columns of *The American Freeman*, as a contributor, or merely in a passing (favorable) reference, you immediately received dozens of letters from every part of the continent welcoming you to the fraternity.

In his last years, as more and more emphasis was being placed on "conformity," such mention took on added importance. A few weeks before his death in 1952, Haldeman-Julius was bitterly attacked by the Hearst columnist Westbrook Pegler, who called him a "party-line atheist." Probably for the first time in his life, Haldeman-Julius found it necessary to write a "defensive" paragraph. In the last few issues of his paper he avowed that he was not, and never had been, a Communist sympathizer. "It is very sad," he wrote, "that at this late date it is necessary to explain the difference between a Social Democrat and a Communist. I represent the true American tradition of radicalism; in fact, I am probably the last of the great American radicals." He

blamed Norman Thomas for the decline of the American socialist movement. He wrote: "Thomas writes for the *Reader's Digest*, and the *New York Times* calls him a gentleman. What kind of a Socialist is that?"

BUT it was clearly a time for the "fraternity" to close its ranks. Even the familiar full-page "Little Blue Books" advertisements, which had cost E. Haldeman-Julius about \$30,000 a year, were no longer accepted by the major daily newspapers. One or two publications agreed to accept the advertisements on condition that the "atheist" and "socialist" titles be eliminated from the list, and the signature of an advertising agency be substituted for the name "Haldeman-Julius."

During one of his last advertising campaigns, he ran three full pages in a Philadelphia daily. The publisher was swamped with letters and telephone calls protesting the publication of the "Little Blue Books" catalog. There were postcards from entire classes of parochial schools. The day after the ad appeared, the newspaper ran a box apologizing for having accepted the business. Haldeman-Julius refused to pay the \$4,800.00 bill, and he was never pressed for payment. And again, when a smaller daily in Indiana ran the advertisement, it received hundreds of complaints, which Haldeman-Julius claimed were inspired by the Catholic Legion of Decency. The paper published an editorial urging its readers not to buy any of the "Little Blue Books" which it had advertised the day before. The advertisement cost \$350.00, and Haldeman-Julius refused to pay. The publisher of the paper entered suit in St. Louis, where the advertising order had been issued, contending that his editorial page is independent of his advertising columns. The court, however, decided in favor of Haldeman-

Julius. It declared that while the publisher had a right to tell his readers not to read the "Little Blue Books," he couldn't collect for an ad after he had "counter-advertised" in his editorial columns that the merchandise offered on his advertising page should not be bought.

Other troubles beset the publisher in the last months of his life. There was an income-tax suit by the government which resulted in a six-months' prison sentence, plus a fine of \$12,500. Haldeman-Julius had claimed that the monies involved were free-will gifts from subscribers to carry on the work of *The American Freeman*, and as such were not reportable. He died before his appeal was heard.

He had written his own epitaph a year before:

"At the close of the 20th Century some flea-bitten, sun-bleached, fly-specked, rat-gnawed, dandruff-sprinkled professor of literature is going to write a five-volume history of the books of our century. In it a chapter will be devoted to publishers and editors of books, and in that chapter perhaps a footnote will be given to me. It might say that I was a competent editor, shrewd salesman, daring advertiser, and able publisher; that I edited thousands of books; that I sold hundreds of millions of copies, and usefully served a portion of my generation with fairness, sincerity, and intelligence. It might mention my forthright attacks on all forms of Supernaturalism, Mysticism, Fundamentalism, and respectable and dignified bunk in general. It may even go so far as to say that I changed the reading habits of America and created millions of new readers for the book publishers who followed me."

Haldeman-Julius then proceeded to blow up his "footnote" to a pamphlet of 70,000 well-chosen words.

IT ALL began in the early 1900's, when Emanuel Julius (the Haldeman-Julius came later) became enthralled with the printed word and conceived the idea of some day printing books inexpensively for the masses. His parents were Jewish immigrants from Odessa who settled in Philadelphia, where Emanuel was born in 1889. Later his birthplace was torn down to make room for a bridge, and Haldeman-Julius commented: "From now on those who wish to celebrate my birthplace will have to crawl under the bridge."

His father was a bookbinder, "not religious," observed Emanuel, "but he considered himself a 'good Jew.'" Before he finished high school, Emanuel had to go to work to contribute to the support of the household. He was an usher in a theater, a bellhop in a private school for girls, and a copyreader on a Philadelphia daily. All this time he was reading everything in sight, with particular emphasis on socialism and freethought. He eventually joined the Socialist party, and took up collections and sold literature in his spare time. He sold his first article for publication while still a bellhop at the private school at Tarrytown, N. Y. He described the event: "I had read all the works of Mark Twain and copied the paragraphs in which he had criticized the unequal distribution of wealth and other inequalities in our economic structure. When the great man died, I put these paragraphs in an article entitled 'Mark Twain—Radical,' which was published in the highbrow magazine, *The International Social Review*, for which I received the sum of \$10.00—my Mark Twain reading while a bellhop in Miss Mason's School of four hundred pretty and rich virgins had paid a handsome dividend."

At twenty, his work attracted the attention of one of the stalwarts of the socialist movement, Congressman Vic-

tor L. Berger of Milwaukee, (Wisc.), who hired Emanuel as feature writer and City Hall reporter for his *Daily Leader*. (Berger published another socialist paper in the German language.) Carl Sandburg was a member of the staff, writing a weekly round-up column on the strikes in the area and in general editing Socialist party news. After two years in Milwaukee, young Emanuel followed Sandburg to the *Chicago World*, a socialist paper which had skyrocketed to a daily circulation of 200,000 because of a strike on the big papers. When the *World* blew up after a year, Sandburg went on to the *News* and soon thereafter wrote his "Chicago," which made him a famous poet overnight. Emanuel Julius hit out for Los Angeles and more newspaper work on the socialist *Western Comrade*.

It was not long before New York beckoned, and early in 1914 he was appointed Sunday editor and dramatic critic of the New York *Call*, the leading socialist paper in the country. On the side he was now writing many of the socialist pamphlets which had so impressed him as a young man in Philadelphia. In 1914, Louis Kopelin, his senior editor on the *Call*, went out to Girard, Kansas, to help J. A. Wayland edit the *Appeal to Reason*, a socialist paper with a national circulation. The following year he sent for his young friend Emanuel Julius. In Girard, Emanuel met and married Marcet Haldeman, a niece of Jane Addams of Hull House. The Haldemans had been Kansas pioneers, and Marcet's father, a banker, was one of the state's wealthiest citizens. The marriage resulted in a combination of their names, and Emanuel Julius became E. Haldeman-Julius.

The Appeal to Reason, however, had long since been on the decline, and when Kopelin came out in support of President Wilson and the war against

Germany, the paper lost half of its remaining circulation. This was a cleavage among the radicals of America from which neither the *Appeal* nor the Socialist party itself was ever to recover. Soon thereafter Wayland sold out, and with the *Appeal* on its last legs, Haldeman-Julius bought the entire printing plant and other assets with \$25,000 he borrowed from his wife, plus a \$50,000 note payable in one year.

Haldeman-Julius had looked forward to this day. He dusted off two books which he had always carried with him, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* and Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, and instructed his printer to set them in 8-point type 16 ems wide (the average newspaper column is about 12 ems). These he printed on ordinary newsprint stock with a blue paper cover, cut to $3\frac{1}{2}$ by 5 inches. They became "Little Blue Books," Nos. 1 and 2; the beginning of a gigantic enterprise in its own right, and the predecessor of the giant pocket-books industry of today. He sent out a circular to the list of 175,000 subscribers and former subscribers of the *Appeal to Reason*. He asked them to send five dollars for fifty booklets as they came off the press, to be mailed five at a time. He received \$25,000 in the first batch of returns, and the "Little Blue Books" were on their way. By 1949, Haldeman-Julius had sold well over 300 million booklets at 5¢ each. The introductory offer at 10¢ each had been reduced as soon as he got into steady production.

BUT Emanuel did not allow business to interfere with his socialist and freethought convictions. He leaned heavily on writings of the skeptics and dissenters, and put his imprimatur on the opinions of Margaret Sanger, Clarence Darrow, H. G. Wells, Upton Sinclair, Havelock Ellis, Morris Hillquit and Bertrand Russell. Will Durant's

Story of Philosophy, which had a tremendous sale later as a five-dollar book, was written originally for the "Little Blue Books." There were many others: lesser known liberals, obscure atheists, and sexologists, from whom regular publishers shied away for fear of antagonizing potential buyers of books. That was all the recommendation Haldeman-Julius needed to put a manuscript on his presses. The radicals and "rationalists" of the past were his great favorites. The orations of Col. Robert Ingersoll sold over 450,000 copies. Two titles of Thomas Paine accounted for a quarter of a million, and another half million sales were divided between Voltaire and Herbert Spencer. These "leftist" and rationalist works, which Haldeman-Julius called "mind-liberating books," made up about one-fourth of his output. The major portion was reprints and condensations of the classics and other works in the public domain, including the Bible, Shakespeare (four million copies), Aesop, Balzac, Hugo, Dumas, Carlyle, Emerson, Poe, Burns, Tolstoy, Zola, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Gorki, Max Nordau, Ambrose Bierce, Ibsen, Longfellow, all of Horatio Alger—in fact, most of the major works of literature, history, economics, philosophy and science. The rest of his more than 2,000 titles were made up of pamphlets on sex, love, psychiatry, "confessions" of unfrocked priests, and a great many more of pure hokum such as *How to be a Leader Among Men*, *How to Tie All Kinds of Knots*, etc. And that was not all. Haldeman-Julius sold four million larger pamphlets at 25¢ and 35¢ each, many of which he wrote himself. His wife, Marcet, also contributed twenty or twenty-five titles to the list. She died in 1941. Later Haldeman-Julius married Sue Haney, who had been his secretary for many years.

In all her own published writings on

politics and sociology, Marcet Haldeman-Julius shared her husband's socialist and agnostic views. One of her titles, *What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About*, sold only 1,000 copies the first year. Emanuel renamed the book *Marcet Haldeman-Julius's Intimate Notes on Her Husband*. Sales skyrocketed to 15,000 copies. The profits over the years went into new machinery and plant expansion, as well as for the creature comforts of their home. Haldeman-Julius loved luxury and good dining. In every issue of *The American Freeman* he had something to say about a new culinary delight which had come out of his kitchen, or he would tell of a long trip to a distant city or farm to taste a special dish or a meal he had heard about. He once wrote that during his early days in the radical movement there was little chance for him to polish off the rough edges of the boy who had come out of the slums of Philadelphia. Socialists in those days had not been particularly concerned with the social "amenities." However, his ambitious and discerning eye concentrated on one unusual socialist leader, the editor John Spargo, who Haldeman-Julius said had "society manners" which he decided to study and imitate. "I watched him order a meal, and studied his eating manners and how he handled himself generally. Those were lessons which paid off for me in 'good living' many years later."

Short and stocky of build, just under five feet six inches in height, Haldeman-Julius was constantly subject to overweight, and in later years he was forced to cut down on his smoking and eliminate alcohol entirely. With good eating came an appreciation and understanding of good music, the opera and the symphonies. He considered himself an authority on Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn, although he confined his articles to those composers who had "ra-

tionalist" leanings. He insisted that Beethoven was an atheist and went into long dissertations on the composer's theological views. Along these lines he brushed aside, as beneath his consideration, the great church music, the requiems, oratorios, gospel hymns and the liturgical music of the synagogue. His writings on art followed the same pattern. He went into ecstasy over the work of Leonardo Da Vinci, and just as his readers began to worry that he might be "cracking up," Haldeman-Julius gleefully announced that the old master who had painted *The Last Supper* had also designed a special deluxe brothel in Venice, "and in the same year, too."

By 1929, with close to one thousand titles on his list, Haldeman-Julius swung into big production. The profits had enabled him to pay off the note and the loan from his wife, as well as to buy modern equipment for his plant. He could now produce 80,000 "Little Blue Books" every eight hours. On several occasions he worked three eight-hour shifts. He re-examined his entire operation, and began to eliminate titles that had not sold a minimum of 10,000 copies a year. He added new ones and gave some slow sellers a second chance. Thus de Maupassant's *The Tallow Ball*, which had only sold a few thousand a year, was given a new cover inscribed *A French Prostitute's Sacrifice*. The following year, sales jumped to 54,000 copies. Gautier's *Fleece of Gold* was another ailing "Little Blue Book," selling only 5,000 copies before 1925. Haldeman-Julius said: "This amazed me; in fact, it nearly floored me. There are two good reasons why this book should be a top-notch seller. First, the author was a Frenchman. American readers have a weakness for tales by French authors. Second, it is an excellent story . . . but a moment's hesitation

shows what was wrong. What could *Fleece of Gold* mean to anyone who had never heard of Gautier? Little, if anything. So, the book became *The Quest for a Blonde Mistress*; exactly the sort of story it is." Next year, 50,000 copies.

And so it went, with Hugo's *The King Enjoys Himself* changed to *The Lustful King Enjoys Himself*, and Zorilla's *None Beneath the King* transformed into *None Beneath the King Shall Enjoy this Woman*.

Individual book orders, over the years, averaged \$1.75 apiece, mailed to Girard from all parts of the world. The government installed a Class A post office to handle the business. In thirty years they added up to over ten million individual customers. There was the reader living near the Arctic Circle who sent \$50 every year for a shipment of new titles; embassy officials and clerks on assignment to foreign countries bought \$20 and \$25 worth; Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia was a regular. Haldeman-Julius commented, "The Lion of Judah reads practically the same kind of books which would appeal to an intelligent taxi-driver, with a few sexology titles thrown in."

The business was all done by mail, and even the sale of millions of books each year did not quite reflect the full extent of this publishing phenomenon. Millions more were exchanged among readers and bought in second-hand stores across the country. During the depression years particularly, high school and college students could pick up 50 titles for a dollar, and entire libraries of "Little Blue Books" accumulated in the wards of the hospitals, and in the cell-blocks of the penitentiaries of America. Haldeman-Julius once wrote a composite letter from the thousands he had received from people whose lives had been influenced by the "Little Blue Books," and how "my little

books added to their pleasure, increased their knowledge, broadened their views, offered entertainment, nicked away at the mountains of bunk, reduced their passion for superstition and supernaturalism, introduced them to the best in literature, and in other ways helped them along the way to self-education."

It was Haldeman-Julius who originated the pun in answer to the question: What book would you want if you were shipwrecked on a desert island? The "Little Blue Book" *How to Build a Boat* took care of that problem. Then there was the letter which came to Girard from South Carolina: "You have not been getting my book orders recently because I've been in jail for the past six months for operating a still. During the trial the still was brought into the court room. The judge, jury and spectators agreed that it was the finest piece of coppersmithing ever seen in this section. I owe it all to the 'Little Blue Books.'"

Sex and love were the all-time best sellers: *Plain Talks with the Married*, Boccaccio, *The Art of Kissing*, *Strange Sex Practices*, etc. Each sold from 40,000 to 150,000 copies a year. Many of his customers were as self-conscious about ordering these as if they were face-to-face with the clerk in a book store. From a thousand miles away a customer would send in his list for 10 or 20 "Little Blue Books" and start off with *Curiosities of Mathematics*, *How to Play the Piano*, and others in a similar vein, but sandwiched in among them was *How to Make Love*, which always brought the gleeful comment from Emanuel: "That's all the guy wanted in the first place."

Self-improvement was next: *Success Better Than Failure*, *100 Best Books to Read*, *How to Improve Your Vocabulary*, etc. One year Haldeman-Julius made up a set of pamphlets advertised to give the reader "the equivalent of a

high school education." In ten months he sold 300,000 sets at \$2.98 each.

Humor books came third, contemporary and classic alike; Mark Twain, Josh Billings and others, including joke books, puzzle books and *How to Do 25 Parlor Tricks*.

THROUGH the years, however, socialism and freethought books remained his pride and joy, but toward the end of his life there was an interesting development in both his writings and private correspondence. With the advent of Hitler and world-wide anti-Semitism, Haldeman-Julius for the first time began to think of his life and philosophy in terms of "the Jew." Not that he wavered in his atheistic convictions, but a skepticism of another sort was clearly evident. In the old days all a fellow had to do was laugh at the story of Jonah and the whale or read a few of the Col. Robert Ingersoll pamphlets, and he was automatically welcomed into the ranks of the "liberals" and "freethinkers." This was a simplification of the Ingersoll-and-Darwin ethos that finally caught up with Haldeman-Julius in the last few years of his life. He discovered to his anger and dismay that atheism did not prevent anti-Semites from being anti-Semitic, nor despots from being despotic.

The "blow" came early in 1944. An atheist organization known as The Truth Seeker published a book called *The Bible, Church, and God*. Since the dust-jacket claimed that the book "reveals the superstitions and stupidities of the Bible," Haldeman-Julius welcomed it with open arms. He accepted the advertising and supplemented it with a plug or two of his own. When it was pointed out to him that the book contained a violent diatribe against the Jewish people, the Girard agnostic could hardly control his anger. To his credit, let it be said that he did not

dodge the issue; he readily admitted that he hadn't read the book, and for weeks thereafter tried bitterly to undo the effect of his earlier recommendation. He counter-attacked: "To think that they call themselves 'Freethinkers' and peddle such bigotry and hate." His disappointment, of course, went much deeper. He now recalled the anti-Semitism of such comrades as Edgar Lee Masters and Jack London. He had personally interviewed London for the *Western Comrade*, and now, thirty years later, expressed his regrets. "I'm sorry that I didn't let loose with his [Jack London's] vile expressions against the Jewish people, but I thought I was serving socialism by suppressing this unpleasant fact." He began to write of his early years as a Jewish boy on the streets of Philadelphia: ". . . the anti-Semitism of the wretched poor in my old Philadelphia neighborhood was a terrible thing to live with."

In one of his last published booklets he wrote: "I've been trying to figure something out for a long time. I found anti-Semitism among Socialists, Freethinkers, professionals, teachers, and persons who described themselves as 'liberals.' When I was the only Jew on a newspaper staff, I was given more to do than any other man on the paper, was paid less, and made the butt of jests and veiled insults. If I did something well, I was not a good newspaperman, but a 'brilliant Jew.' If I wrote an amusing story, I wasn't a good writer, but a 'witty Jew.' I was never permitted to forget my origin. I've been trying to work it out for a long time. What is it that put me to one side? Was it religion? Well, it happens that I became a Freethinker while still a boy, and never accepted any more of Judaism than I believed in Catholicism or Protestantism. Was it a matter of race? Just what race does a Jew belong to? Is there an anthropologist in any uni-

versity in the world who is ready to assert that there's such a thing as the Jewish race? I had always thought of myself as a member of the Caucasian race, but no one seemed to grant the validity of such classification."

When he was taunted by a reader that he no longer referred to rabbis in his articles "against supernaturalism and obscurantism," he commented: "You have answered the question yourself, by referring to me as a 'Jew' even though my atheism is known to the entire world. I have finally come to the conclusion that Judaism is more of a civilization than a creed." In answer to a letter from a young agnostic Jew, Haldeman-Julius wrote: "Let me admit that never once in my life did I feel absolutely secure. Apparently there is no such thing for the Jew. But don't waste emotional energy worrying about it. Adopt my system. Don't worry about your situation. Do your job well and make the most of your chances. It's worked in my case. I have created through toil and brains an atmosphere that's my own—free and stimulating. It's so secure that no bigot can strike through my defenses, as long as the laws defend me in my right to function and assert my personality. Keep your eye on those laws and do everything you can to prevent their subversion. There's very little else you can do. I have found out that logic is unavailing. Appeals to decency are futile. To fret too much over the problem is to fall into a condition of neuroticism. Get as many laughs as you can gather. Eat well in order to remain strong. We Jews must eat well above everything else. Whatever you do, don't live in fear; it makes for hysteria. Keep your sense of humor, your appreciation of the limitations that are set against you—and go ahead with whatever you are doing to the last minute."

Strange advice from a man like him.

As an atheist, he found himself in yet another dilemma as a Social Democrat. He found he had even a kind word for that special devil of all agnostics, William Jennings Bryan. A correspondent had sent Haldeman-Julius a book containing the less-publicized speeches of Col. Robert Ingersoll. The patron saint of the village atheists of America had made the nominating speech for the Republican politician, James G. Blaine, whom he had dubbed "The Plumed Knight." In the subsequent campaign against the Democratic candidate Grover Cleveland, "Col. Bob of the Unfettered Mind," as he was known, closed all his speeches with, "... every man who has endeavored to tear down our flag from the heaven which it enriches was a Democrat ... every man that clutched from crouching mothers babes from their breasts and sold them into slavery was a Democrat ... every man that tried to spread small-pox and yellow fever in the North ... was a Democrat. Every scar, every arm that is missing, every limb that is gone, is a souvenir of a Democrat." The correspondent had carefully pointed out that Fundamentalist Bryan had once fought for a proposal advocating

the eight-hour work day. Haldeman-Julius commented sadly: "Yes, Bryan did some good work; even with all his crack-pot ideas, he kept alive the agitation for economic reform in America."

But the dilemma of Haldeman-Julius went far beyond William Jennings Bryan and Col. Robert Ingersoll. In the struggle for human freedom against the totalitarian states, it was soon discovered that the "marriage" of atheism and humanitarianism had been a fake.

The writer of this article could only add to his friend's woes. We had been trying to organize a Scottsboro Committee here in Charlotte, North Carolina, and I had to let him know that our only encouragement had come from three Presbyterian clergymen and one high Episcopalian layman. The world was choosing up sides, right down to the level of the local township, and Haldeman-Julius, liberal, soon found himself fighting beside Christian and Jewish allies whom he had mocked all of his life. "I agree, not all religious people are reactionaries, and not all atheists are humanitarians," he had to admit. His thirty-five years of atheist "leadership" had brought him to an intellectual dead-end.



In a Ma'abarah

By YITZHAK SHENHAR



HOW long does a man stay in a *ma'abarah*? Months, years, maybe a lifetime—who knows? The Merciful One is the heart of Israel. He computes and measures days of yore, but so fleeting is time that our reckoning of the passing days seems, alas, disjointed . . .

What does it mean—a *ma'abarah*?

There are tents and tinhuts, there are wooden cabins and shacks, and among them grasses spring up, babies spring up, the days move on. Around the weeds and the babies and the days there is a fence, made of iron thorns, row upon row, four rows in all.

In the fence there is a gate. Our sages in the *ma'abarah* disagree about this gate. Some say it is the gate of Sodom, others that it is the gate of Glory, still others that it is one of the gates of tears, or of prayer, or of repentance. Anyway, my friend, the gate is open and whoever wishes is free to leave.

There are those who want to and those who do not want to. This is no simple matter.

There we sit brooding, families in Israel, from Iraq, Yemen, Iran, Rumania and the rest of the world.

YITZHAK SHENHAR (Shenberg) is one of the outstanding short story writers in Israel. Like many other Israeli writers of European origin, he has felt challenged to interpret the life and the stirrings of the oriental Jewish communities that moved en masse and almost overnight from the medievalism of the fastnesses of Arabia to the outskirts of Israel's cities.

Who lives in the wooden cabins?

Who knows . . . maybe those who got there earlier. Maybe some who have a sickness in their bodies or maybe those who are Shiknazim (Ashkenazim). I and my family live in a big tent. Do you think, my friend, a tent is no good? It is very good. The tent of the righteous will blossom, praised be the Merciful God. You lift the folds of the tent and a wind comes blowing in from below and cools the air for you on sultry days. You drop the folds and warmth gathers about you on cold, rainy days.

Still, a tent is no house of stone roofed with cedars and beamed with cypresses. Sometimes you have to drive the stakes faster to the ground or a north wind will come and blow it off your head and you will find yourself standing stripped bare under the open sky and the stars with your wife and your children.

But to fasten tent pegs is nothing shameful.

Still, Esther, my wife, sits at the door of the tent and says, "Here is not Israel."

"No?" says I to her. "So where is Israel, where?"

"Outside of the gate, there is Israel. Not here."

"So," say I to her, "is our belly stuck to the ground? Come, let us go out of the gate and we will be in Israel."

"What sense is there to this? We will only have to return here, won't we? So we will be going out to Israel and coming back from Israel, back and forth. What good is it? What profit is there in it?"

"Well, then, woman," I say, "do you want to go outside of the fence or do you want to stay here? I don't understand."

"Understanding is the Lord's," says she.

"*Tayib!*"

I HAVE three sons, Hugros the oldest, Shimeon the second and Akhim the youngest. Hugros is working in the *ma'abarah*; Shimeon is working in town; and Akhim is not working yet. I have a daughter too. Beracha is her name. She is a girl who can sew and cook and is handy in all ways. She can sing, too, and is a member of our choir. Once some woman came from town and said that all the groups in the *ma'abarah* must sing together, and twice a week she brings the boys and girls together, sets them up in two rows facing each other and they sing. That's how we have a choir. Beracha knows all the songs, my friend, gay ones and sad ones, all about boys who have gone to the army and the shepherd in the Galil who lost his sheep. But she herself is always merry. Even when singing mournful songs she keeps twirling on one foot like a spinning-top. She sings while my wife and I sit on the mats outside the tent. I smoke my narghile, my wife mends clothes; I smoke my narghile and my wife rolls *pittas* for dinner. At dusk Hugros comes back from work. Shimeon comes home from work; Beracha comes back from wherever it is—but till we sit down to the meal we have to wait for Akhim.

"What is keeping him there?" says Hugros. "We are always waiting for him."

"He needs thrashing a bit," says Shimeon. "Then he'd learn."

"What's all this fuss and bother?" says my wife. "The meal is not ready yet. The fire is burning low."

Akhim comes in from the Culture Room where he has been taking evening lessons and we all sit down to the meal. After a while Akhim says, "I want to get out of here. I don't want to stay here. This is no life."

Hugros: "Are you babbling foolishness again? How many times have I told you we can't leave the *ma'abarah*. What for? We have a free house here. Why should we leave?"

Shimeon: "We'll stay here till we make some money working on our jobs. Why should we leave now and have to pay rent? What for? We'll stay here and keep saving, saving, saving. Then we'll see."

But Akhim says, "What will we see? We lived in a *ma'abarah*—enough! We lived like miserable paupers, now I want us to live in Israel."

Hugros jumps on him. "What kind of talk is that? You're nothing but a little jackass!"

And Shimeon backs him up. "He's not earning a penny yet and he's already talking! Just because they are getting him dizzy and half blind with those evening lessons and stuffing his head with a lot of nonsense he thinks he's very smart."

Akhim says, "People are leaving here, aren't they? All the time people try to get out of the *ma'abarah*. Only we are stuck here, good and stuck."

Hugros shouts, "It's easy to say 'leave'. It's something you do—snap! just like that, huh?"

Little Beracha pitches in. "We've got to live in town. There they have everything. What are we, Bedouins living in tents?"

Shimeon turns on her. "You shut up, you little snotnose!"

Beracha taunts him: "And if you get married? You'll bring her here to sleep too? Fine for you! There's plenty of room here! What do you say, father?"

"What do I say? I say you should all stop quarreling. I say that the Merciful is great in His heavens and He will do on earth as He sees fit. But Hugros and Shimeon are the ones earning money, they are the ones making a living for us and the decision is theirs."

Akhim says, "Then I'll leave by myself."

"Where will you go—where to?" my wife says. "Your mouth talks and does not hear what it says."

"Don't think I don't know, mother, I know!"

And I just sit listening to all these arguments back and forth and I see the food on the table before me and I say to myself that there are lots of tomorrows and the world is ruled with His mercy. After a while, when silence descends on our tent, we go on with our meal, every one intent on his own plate and the food in his mouth. Then we go outside.

There is a soft breeze blowing and the stars are out. Women from neighboring huts come and pour out the remains of their cooking, their soups. Little rivulets form in front of the tents and by their odor you can tell what each tinhut had eaten.

Malesh (never mind)! Puddles of slops are nothing. In the morning the sun will shine and will dry them up. The sun is not finicky, my friend. You don't have to coax it. It licks them all up.

Hugros and Shimeon stay a while with us on the mat as a sign of respect and good breeding, then slip away and are gone. Akhim sits at first like a child spanked, gets up, sits down, gets up again and begins shuffling off somewhere.

"Where to?" asks my wife.

"Don't know," he says, just like that. And goes off among the wooden cabins of the *ma'abarah*.

Only Beracha remains with us. She sits clasping her knees with her hands, and her eyes raised to the stars.

My wife says to her, "Don't look at the stars so much, daughter. It is not good."

"What's wrong with it? The stars have a house in the sky. There everything is clean and pure, isn't it?"

"People who keep gazing at the stars suddenly imagine they have gone off on a wrong path and they begin thinking of going somewhere else . . ."

Beracha falls silent a while, then says, "Akhim never looked at the stars much. How about him?"

"Akhim is still unsettled. He does not know what he wants. When boys are young that's how they are. When they are thirsty they think they want to eat, when they are hungry they think they want to drink."

"Mother, do you think he will really leave?"

"Akhim has not got a mind of his own yet, he is just swaying with the wind. I am not really worried."

"But I am, mother."

"An empty pot does not know the difference between honey, water and olive water," says my wife to distract her.

So we sat and rested till great darkness fell upon us. We saw groups of people coming through the gate to take a walk on the highway. My wife and I went out too. The road is very very long. It goes straight, then it winds. You turn left and you come to a *moshavah*, you turn right and you come to a big city. We walked a while on the highway. I kept listening to people's conversations and by their voices I knew:

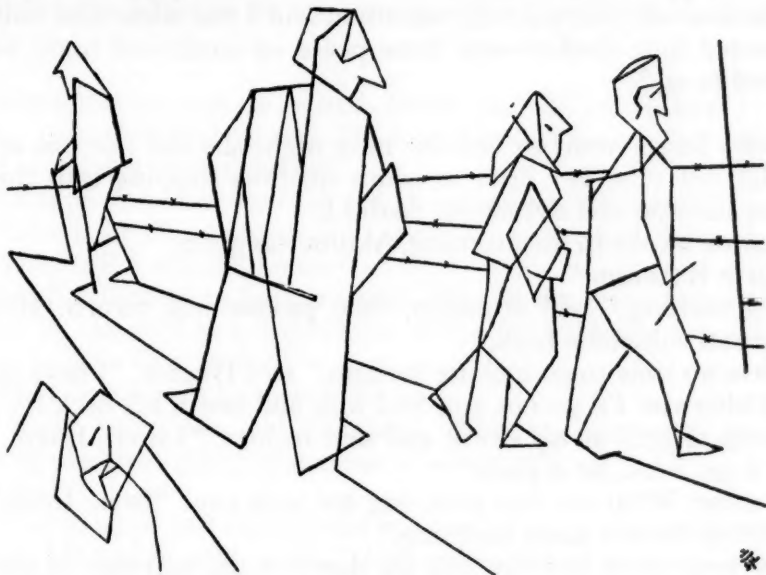
There goes Shimeon Mizrahi who is always telling tall tales about the six houses that he had on the bank of the Tigris and here he is just wandering around aimlessly all day in a pair of green pajamas that the Jews of America sent him as charity.

There goes old Señora Gentile who dyes her hair and talks her French lingo very rapidly. She is very stuck up and disdainful of us. She has a son in Tel Aviv who'll soon be a lawyer. He does not want to come to the *ma'abarah* any more. Señora Gentile goes to see him twice a month.

There goes Avraham from Iran, grumbling and glum, with eight souls in his tinhut. What good are they, the eight of them and all babies, and he, Avraham, keeps looking at the scene before him and can't rid himself of the gnawing question: were his poverty and wretchedness in

Iran as great or are his poverty and wretchedness in Israel even greater?

There goes Mr. Salomon. He is a *jauharji* (jeweler) who came from Rumania. He had come to Israel some years ago, had lived in a big hotel, had ridden around in a car. But he did not like the country so he upped and left and went back to his old place taking all his money and jewels with him, every bit of it. There a wicked ruler came and robbed him of everything. So he came back and here he is living with us in the *ma'abarah*. An angry man . . .



Over there is Azariah ben David who is already a member of a workers' party and is scheduled to leave soon, get a parcel of land and till the soil. But he has not decided yet where to go, the Galil or the Negev. So meanwhile he runs from meeting to meeting, argues with everybody, and so far has not set eyes on either the Negev or the Galil.

Howdee, howdee, friend! I am a man, you are a man and it goes without saying there are a lot of people in our *ma'abarah* and they go walking around and talking under the blue heavens above.

When we got back to our tent it was dark. There was no light.

"She must have gone off again to sing with her girl friends."

"So what?" said my wife. "Let her sing. It is not about her that I am worried."

"*Tayib.*"

We went to bed. I squeezed my eyelids and prepared for sleep but Esther kept tossing from side to side forcing sleep from her eyes.

"What is the matter, woman?" I asked.

"Nothing, nothing. I thought someone was pulling at the tent rope."

She was silent a while, then raised her head again and listened to the darkness.

"What is it now, woman?"

"Nothing, nothing. I just thought someone was pulling up the tent stake."

But I knew she couldn't keep herself from worrying about Akhim and what he said and I knew she was afraid of all kinds of things besides, the evil eye, spooks and demons of the night. But what could I do? It does not pay to start debating these matters with her. So I just chased the sleep from my eyes and stared with her into the empty darkness of the tent.

First Beracha came back, then the boys came back one after the other. Each one slipped into the tent and lay down in his place. We could not tell who was who but my wife was silent and I was silent and only after we counted four shadows was there peace on earth and night reigned from end to end.

WHEN Esther went to bed the next night she did not toss around, did not raise her head to count shadows slipping into the tent, but shut her eyes and fell asleep. So did I.

When we awoke in the morning, Akhim was gone.

"Where is Akhim?"

"It is nothing," said Shimeon, "the jackass will return. He'll get hungry and will come back."

"I have no time to go looking for him," said Hugros. "I have to go to work. Otherwise I'd go out and find him and break his neck for him."

Beracha tugged at his sleeve and said to him, "Listen, listen, I told you he'd go. Well, he is gone."

"Go away. What are you pestering me with your 'listen, listen.' The whole thing doesn't mean anything."

They went away and my wife sat down at the entrance of the tent, her face downcast, her hands on her lap. She sat for an hour, she sat for another hour, without cracking any seeds, without patching any clothes.

"What's the trouble, wife? Why is your tongue so idle all of a sudden?"

"I don't know," Esther said.

"What don't you know? In the army they won't take him, he's too young. To work they won't take him, he's too small. So what? He'll knock about in the streets a bit and then come back."

"I don't know," said my wife again. "You, my husband, are a very wise man and the world is to you always very plain and simple. All I want to know is—do I have a son or don't I have a son?"

In the evening, at mealtime, Hugros slapped her on the back and said, "Don't worry, mother. Akhim is a bit daffy but nothing will happen to him. He won't have any food and he'll come back. At night he'll come back on tiptoe and steal over to his bed. If not, he'll come back tomorrow. You'll see."

"I'll see, I'll see!" said my wife. "My eyes are grey with ashes and I cannot see a thing but God can see through my heart."

But Akhim did not return that evening or that night.

When we went to bed my wife said to me in the darkness, "Oh husband of mine, you don't want to talk about it at all?"

"Everything is in the hands of the Ancient of Days," I answered.

"Then what?"

"The Lord will ward over him and will keep him from all harm. The Lord has a thousand eyes, you know that?"

"Yes, yes. A thousand eyes. That is a fine thing. But what if one eye closes a bit, just the eye that must ward over Akhim. Then what?"

"Now you are talking out of foolishness and not out of a sound mind."

"I can't help it. My heart is hammering."

"Tell your heart to do its beating quietly and not to darken your mind."

MORNING came and no Akhim. Noon, and still no Akhim.

My wife said to me, "So what now? Are you just going to sit there twiddling your thumbs?"

"What do you want me to do? Shall I champ at the earth?"

"There is a police in town, isn't there? Go to the police."

"What will I tell the police?"

"You'll tell them to look for him. What is the matter? Is Akhim just a weed in the wall or a wild thorn of the field? Maybe something happened to him, God forbid!"

"What could have happened?"

"I don't know. Go and tell them. What is the matter? Is someone keeping you from going or are you afraid to go?"

"*Tayib!*"

I went to town and entered the police station. A policeman was sitting at the table and he said to me, "*Ahlan wasahlan* (Greeting). What is the trouble?"

"I have a son, and his name is Akhim. He is my youngest son. He left our tent in the *ma'abarah* and has not returned since."

The policeman asked my name, the name of my father, the names of the people in the family, what they do, where they work, when they were born. After he wrote all this down in a big ledger, he took out a notebook full of names and began looking through it.

"What is this?" I asked.

The policeman told me this was a list of boys who were arrested for stealing.

"Stealing!" I felt a bitter taste in my mouth. "My Akhim is no thief! I can swear to that!"

"You can't tell. You mothers and fathers don't know anything about these things. Why, you always think that your children are precious gold but you don't know what is going on in the heads of those little scoundrels who suddenly feel like having a good time. So they deceive you, blind and dumb, go out at night and do things that are not so nice. They hook things from here and there, find themselves a dark hideout . . . till we grab them."

He looked at my face and softened a little. "That's how it is, what can I do? But on my list I don't have the name you gave me. Maybe your little scoundrel made up another name for himself beforehand. Who knows?"

"Begging your pardon, when were all those kids arrested?"

"Four days ago, five days ago, six days ago."

"Ah," I said to him, "praised be our Father and His Holy name. Akhim disappeared only yesterday."

"So why didn't you say so right away?" the policeman was getting angry.

"A thousand blessings upon your head," I said. "I am an old man already and I don't remember what I said and what I did not say."

"Do you remember what your boy said before he left?"

"He said that he did not want to stay any more in a *ma'abarah*."

"Sure, sure. That's just what I was saying. But what does he want?"

"He wants to live in Israel. The *ma'abarah*, he says, is not Israel."

"Ah yes, yes, of course," said the policeman winking at me as he closed the notebook. "*Tayib*, we'll find him. He won't escape us."

IN THE evening Hugros and Shimeon returned from work.

"Well, has that little skunk come home?"

Shimeon laughed out loud and rubbed his hands. "Don't worry. The boy will come back. Sure he'll come back. And when that devil's brood gets back I'll give him one fine tanning."

But I could see that neither of them felt as sure as the day before and were just making believe.

The next morning Hugros said, "If he does not come back today, we'll have to figure out what to do."

"My humble thanks to you, my son, but what is there to do?"

"We'll think of something."

My wife's voice trailed after me, "Till they think up some idea of theirs *we* have got to do something."

"So what should I do?"

"Go see the *ma'amur* of the *ma'abarah*."

"What can the *ma'amur* do for me?" I said.

But when the boys went off to work I went to see the official in charge of the *ma'abarah*. He was sitting in his office, in a wooden cabin. The *ma'amur*, my friend, is a man who is all bones and bristling hair. He looks at me and I am dead with fright.

"What is the trouble?" he asked.

"Shalom. May blessings follow all your footsteps." And I told him the whole story.

"And what can I do about it?" asked the *ma'amur*. "I have ten thousand souls here. Can I watch over every one of them? Go to the police."

"I have already been there. They told me they'd let me know when they find him. But his mother is worried about him. She can't sleep at night."

"So what do you want me to do? Come and sing her a lullaby?"

"I don't need a lullaby. I came to ask for advice."

"Where would I have advice for everybody and everything? What did the boy say before he left?"

"He said that he did not want to live in a *ma'abarah*. He wants to live in Israel."

"Well, don't you think that is a fine attitude? Isn't it a fine thing for a boy to want to break out of his enclosure and go and settle down like a young and vigorous citizen in his homeland?"

"Yes, of course, it's very fine, but oh *muallem* (honored sir), he is still very young, just a greenhorn, and he does not know anything."

"You too should act like him, all of you!"

"Blessings upon you, the day will come when we too will do so—little by little."

"The young understand this matter better than you. Blessed is the generation where the old hearken unto the young."

"But was it not also said: 'Better the nail of the fathers than the belly of the sons?'"

"That has nothing to do with it!" he sputtered, twitching his face and closing his eyes. "Furthermore I haven't got the time here to match verses with you. But I am sure that you'll get a letter from your son, a letter that will come from one of the kibbutzim or moshavim or some kvutza. You don't have to worry at all. I am certain that his instinct was sound and that he joined the camp of those who are implementing the great vision of the redemption of our nation and the upbuilding of the land."

"*Tayib*, I understand."

When I returned to the tent I said to my wife that the *ma'amur* was of the opinion that we would soon have a letter from Akhim.

"A letter?" My wife was frightened. "Why a letter?"

"Just so. Maybe he went to some kibbutz to become a member there, a halutz!"

"Halutz, halutz," mumbled my wife, and suddenly began crying.

"Why are you crying?"

"I don't want a letter. No, I don't want it. A letter is no good."

"Why is it no good? How do you know it is no good? The *ma'amur* says it is a very fine thing that Akhim went from the *ma'abarah* to a kibbutz."

"A fine thing? Then why does he sit here, why doesn't he go to a kibbutz? When Akhim was with us here, it was not fine? I don't want any letter. I want the police to find him, that's all."

"*Inshallah* (God willing)!"

Afterwards I sat at the door of the tent, my wife sat at the door of the tent while Beracha was skipping around on one foot and singing something about a "finjan" and a bonfire.

People kept walking through the *ma'abarah*, back and forth, and not once did anybody ask where is Akhim. Shimeon Mizrahi passed by in his pajamas, Señora Gentile passed by, Azariah ben David and Mr. Salomon walked by. Not a word. Only Avraham of Iran came over, glum and sour, and asked, "What gives? Is that how things are done in Israel? Are we sitting here inside four blind walls? A boy is kidnapped and nobody does anything!"

"What do you mean 'kidnapped'?" I asked him.

"How do I mean? But when a man goes off suddenly and I see his

mother sitting with a veil over her eyes it is something strange. Where is our *hukumah* (government)? Where is it?"

LATER, when the sun set, Avraham from Iran went back to his children and Hugros and Shimeon came back from work. They came in, looked around. They no longer asked whether Akhim had returned. They did not say anything. We sat down to eat. From all the tinhuts, tents and wooden cabins came the sound of talk and merry laughter. Only here the stillness was so great you could hear the wind outside rubbing against the cloth of the tent. Suddenly someone was standing in the doorway.

Akhim!

What should I say? You know it is written that the Messiah, a wind-fall and a scorpion come upon you unawares, suddenly. Of course, of course, the Messiah, that is a great suddenness, very great. So are a windfall and a scorpion. But I tell you when Akhim entered the tent it was as though something had descended upon us, something terrifying!

Akhim came in, said hello and sat down with us—just like that. Hugros and Shimeon stared at him with big round eyes and completely forgot that they had intended to smack him one. I looked at him and saw that though he looked thinner and his face was drawn, no harm, praised be God, had come to him. His clothes were dirty—*malesh*. Beracha looked at him with her mouth wide open as though someone had pulled her chin down. My wife glanced at him just once, immediately turned away and brought another *pitta* which she placed before him.

Only after a while did we screw up our courage. Hugros spoke up.

"Where were you all the time?"

"Somewhere," answered Akhim.

And Shimeon added in a sweet tone, "And what did you do all the time?"

"Something," replied Akhim.

"Is it such a secret that we must not know?"

"What secret? I have come back, haven't I? There is nothing much to talk about. Enough," said Akhim.

"Indeed we are overjoyed and delighted that you have come back," roared Hugros. "We must serve you food and drink now. Every day we shall bring you a meal dipped in oil and seasoned with honey. How about it?"

"Enough—enough," said my wife.

"What do you mean enough? Here we are like a cart going somewhere. If all the four wheels go in the same direction, *tayib*. But if one wheel suddenly goes off, then what?"

Akhim dropped his eyes to the ground and was silent.

"I went to the police to ask them to look for you," I told him.

"You didn't have to go to the police," he snapped.

"And I also went to the director of the *ma'abarah*."

"There was no need."

"What should I have done?"

"Nothing."

Shimeon turned on him. "If you did such a smart thing, then why did you come back?"

"Just so," said Akhim.

Here Beracha chimed in, "No need to talk any more, or ask questions. No need."

"Tomorrow is Sabbath eve," said my wife.

"Yes, tomorrow is Sabbath eve," chirped Beracha, "and on Saturday night we have a play about King Solomon. It will be fun."

WE WERE sitting just then on the mats outside of the tent when Moshe, the instructor, came from the culture room.

"Shalom," he called.

"Shalom, shalom, please be seated."

"Thank you," he said. "I'll only stay a minute. I've got to go back to my lesson. Akhim, are you coming to class now?"

"No," said Akhim without raising his eyes, "I don't feel like it."

"What's this all of a sudden?" I asked him. "You have always been so anxious to go and now all of a sudden you don't feel like it. Why?"

"It doesn't matter," Moshe put in quickly. "If he doesn't want to this evening, he can come on Saturday night. Yes, Akhim?"

But Akhim did not say yes or no, did not say anything. Moshe went away and I just sat mulling it over in my mind. What is this? The teacher, the instructor himself, takes the trouble to come and invite Akhim to come for a lesson! What is my Akhim—such a great scholar, so learned, so ready to embrace the seven pillars of wisdom that Moshe need be anxious for him? This is indeed something strange! Can I suppose there is something between Moshe and Akhim, things that are not seemly, and that Akhim has finally rebelled and Moshe is pressing him? No, it doesn't seem credible. Boys' secrets don't last long.

I know how headstrong Akhim can be, so I kept quiet and did not ask him anything. Akhim did not tell me anything, either. Nor did he talk to his brothers—not even to his mother. To whom did he finally talk? To Beracha, of all things, to our little Beracha, who is certainly no luminary and to whom we never pay much attention. Why? Maybe he was ashamed before us, and before her he was not. This is a question of the delicacy of a man's heart that needs searching by a wise man!

On Saturday night in the culture room they were putting on a play about King Solomon and Ashmedai. There was great excitement about it. Everybody came running to see the play, men, women and children, everybody except Mr. Salomon and his wife, and Señora Gentile. Hugros and Shimeon also said no, they would go to town, to see a movie. In the movies you can see things about the whole world but this stuff in the *ma'abarah* is just piffle. I got there early with my wife Esther to make sure we had seats. But after sitting for a while with the crowd I said to myself: why should I waste time sitting here? What am I—an empty pit without water? Don't I know the whole story about King Solomon and Ashmedai backwards and forwards? So I got up, went back to the tent and lay down on my bed. I was lying there taking a

catnap when Akhim came and sat down on the mat in front of the tent.

"Akhim, aren't you going to see the play?" Beracha jumped out from somewhere.

"There is still time," said Akhim.

Beracha sat there by his side without saying a word and they both thought there was no one in the tent. After a while Beracha whispered, "Akhim, was it hard?"

"Was what?"

"Your going and coming back."

"*Malesh*," said Akhim. "I am not finished with it yet."

"Are you going again?"

"We'll see."

"Maybe you are too little for it."

"Aw, go on, go on, you little fool," hissed Akhim.

She grew silent, he fell silent, and I just lay in bed and listened.

Then Akhim started to talk. He told his story in a whisper, paused and fumbled for words, all the while picking up pebbles from the ground and rattling them in his hand and again whispering something in Beracha's ear. What Beracha was doing I don't know. She sat there before him like a silent ewe and perhaps her heart was pounding. As for me, I just lay there eavesdropping and heard every word, every single word, I swear. I lay in the dark marveling at Akhim's little heart and how full it was of wild branches. I remember very clearly what I heard.

WHEN Akhim came to town he did not know what to do. He roamed from street to street, from quarter to quarter. He had only one fear—that he might run into his brother Shimeon. After he calmed down a bit he drifted to the market place. There he met a lady who gave him her bundle to carry home for her and paid him a few pennies. He bought himself some food and ate. He returned to the market to look for some more jobs but the older porters chased him away. He began going from store to store asking if they needed a helper but nobody would take him. Meanwhile the day was gone, night came and he had no place to sleep. He went to the park and wanted to lie down on one of the benches but what could he do—all the benches were taken by boys and girls who sat in the dark carrying on foolishness. They sat there till midnight and past midnight while Akhim was walking around among the trees waiting. Finally he found himself a spot, right under a light, lay down and fell asleep. The cold woke him up and he began walking around to warm himself, then again lay down towards morning and fell asleep.

On the following day he went out again to earn his bread in offices and stores but no one would hire him. He went to garages and shops—everybody turned him down. Then he found an old man cleaning boots on a street corner. He took over for him, earned a few pennies, and bought himself some bread. At night he went back to sleep in the park. On the third day when he was hungry, worn out and without a job he went out and found himself a black rag. He tied one piece of

rag over one of his eyes, another piece of rag on his hand and a third piece on his foot. He sat down on a street corner with a tin can before him and there he sat, chanting a mournful tune, his hand extended to the passersby. When he collected some pennies in his box he went and bought himself some bread and olives which he ate in some dark hide-out. Then he returned to his spot on the street corner. Nobody bothered him. But by chance, that morning our teacher from the culture room passed by, recognized his voice, his head, his gestures. He stood aside a while, listened a bit, then came over and said, "Akhim, what are you doing?"



Akhim dropped his head and did not reply.

And Moshe stood over him gazing at him with amazement. "What are you doing all of a sudden? Is that why you did not come to our room yesterday and the day before?"

Akhim just sat there as though there were a gag in his mouth.

"Your father sent you out to do this?"

"My father does not know a thing about this."

"Your mother?"

"My mother doesn't know anything either—I came here by myself."

"Why? But why?"

"Because," said Akhim, and did not explain a thing.

"Get up and have some coffee with me," said Moshe.

"I don't want any coffee."

"Have I done anything to you that you don't want to drink coffee with me?"

Akhim got up, pulled off the rags and followed Moshe. But on the way he stopped and said, "I don't want any coffee. I'll go back to the *ma'abarah*."

Moshe did not stop him. That evening Akhim came back to our tent, and that's that.

So you think, friend, that this is the end? Not so.

You see that hill over there? That hill is not far from here. It is full of all kinds of caves from olden times; the path to it is overgrown with thorns and brambles. Well, Akhim found himself a buddy, another boy like himself, and the two of them picked out a cave, made themselves a bed and they now sleep there every night. They come to the *ma'abarah* just to eat and go back to sleep in their cave. They are not afraid, those two. At night they block the mouth of the cave with big rocks. And that's their game. They make believe they are outside the fence now and are not living in the *ma'abarah* any more.

So what—let the boys have their fun. Nothing will happen to them. My wife does not say anything but secretly she grieves, and every time Akhim is late coming to our tent her heart starts paining her and she asks, "Woe is me, do I have a son or don't I have a son?"

I make believe I don't hear.

Translated from the Hebrew by SIMON CHASEN

Inventory

By JASCHA KESSLER

DAILY made, though unmade nights, we flourish,
safe habits satisfy our thoughts like homes,
perfect husbands perfect wives, clean mirrors,
tried beds, and good fresh meat—there are no witches.

Is it the same face painted, the same shaved?
Browse through *Classified*, dial *Information*.
Nothing's lost, what's wanted? Furniture can't
be moved every day. There are no witches.

We have not waited for some dubious claim:
we strike oil in Jordan, we build derricks;
the shelves are full, every can is labeled:
seek, find, and marry—there are no witches.

Who needs love's memories of love, we're rich!
The wheel is power, night and day run smooth,
the switch is on the wall: no help wanted,
we've got our paychecks. There are no witches.

Reflections on Stalinist Anti-Semitism

A SYMPOSIUM

By MAURICE SAMUEL

THE questions I raise here, in the hope of initiating a public discussion, have occupied me in one form or another for many years. I have not written on them hitherto because there was a kind of taboo about them among intelligent people. Not that I was frightened off by the taboo, but there seemed to be no hope of eliciting helpful comment except from the handful who shared my opinions and who, like me, could get no hearing outside the little circle.

You could not go looking for theories about the nature of Russian Communist anti-Semitism when even sincere anti-Communists would look at you blankly and answer, with a mixture of pity and embarrassment: "But my dear man, one simply doesn't ask that kind of question. Say what you like about Communists, but the fact happens to be that on this point they are in the clear. Perhaps it's just too bad. Perhaps it's a shame that this ugly imbecility, which is integral to Nazism, doesn't fit into the Communist *Weltanschauung*. But it doesn't! I am not pretending that Communist aversion to anti-Semitism has anything to do with liberalism, humanitarianism, decency and that sort of thing. Not at all. But you see, it's the organic character of Communism as a system that is irreversibly hostile to anti-Semitism, or, to be more exact, to the whole complex of reactions of which anti-Semitism is a part. Communism, with its bleak, inhuman rationalism, has swept away the foundations of the ancient evil called anti-Semitism. One might put it paradoxically: Communism has achieved a good thing in spite of itself. Anti-Semitism is a disease of the spiritual life, and in destroying the spiritual life Communism has destroyed the evil along with the good. . . ." *Et ptatati et ptatata.*

Very well, then; the thing that doesn't fit at all into the Communist *Weltanschauung*, the thing to which the organic

character of Communism as a system is irreversibly hostile, manifested itself in the highest echelons of the Communist leadership, if there alone. The Communists themselves no longer deny it. We are of course prepared to hear (and we are prepared to have some anti-Communists believe) that it simply cannot happen again; but since it simply cannot have happened in the first place, either, the assurance, while lacking none of the old impudence, will lack some of the old effects. That, however, is not the issue here. The issue is the nature of Communist anti-Semitism. What is it? How does it fit, as it obviously has done, into the Communist *Weltanschauung*, not of the party rabble, but of some of the party elite. What, in brief, goes on in the mind of Communist anti-Semites?

It might be well to define here the kind of anti-Semitism we are dealing with. It is a feeling of hostility to the Jewish identity *however it manifests itself*, a hostility apparently accompanied or prompted by the belief, or notion, that as long as a Jew accepts the label of Jew he must have in him something that is bad for Communism. This anti-Semitism would differ from the Nazi variety in rejecting the racial element. It would be free from the obsessional demonology of Nazi anti-Semitism which envisaged, or affected to envisage, Judaism as a monstrous world power. Communism demands—and enforces—a complete assimilation of the Jews, a *spurlos Versenken*, where Nazi anti-Semitism declares individuals with a Jewish racial strain to be unassimilable.

My own theory of Communist anti-Semitism does not meet the problem. It is my belief that all dictatorships are offended by the tradition of individualism embodied in the existence of the Jewish people; and this existence has a special offensiveness for Communists because it is also a defiance of the materialist interpretation of

history. But Communists will deny that the mere existence of any people as such can be an offense to Communism; and they will also say that it is idiotic to talk of a "defiance" of the materialist interpretation of history; one might as well talk of the defiance of algebra. They will say, further, that Communism does *not* feel hostility toward the Jewish identity *however it manifests itself*; only toward the anti-Communist elements in Judaism. In other words, they will be saying that a Communist cannot be anti-Semitic. Nevertheless it is they themselves who now "confess" that anti-Semitism manifested itself in the highest echelons of the Communist leadership. It was, then, a deviation, a corruption, a lapse from Communist ideology or morale, they maintain.

With this question I deal below. Let us proceed to the general inquiry.

We may begin by noting an instructive feature of the recent changes in Russia. In the denunciations of Stalin much has been said about the reign of terror which decimated the Soviet leadership, little about the brutalities to which the Russian people has been subjected since the death of Lenin, and even less (certainly within Russia) about the liquidation of Jewish leaders and the Jewish press. What is the reason for these evasions?

As to the first. It is arguable that the enslavement of the Russian masses can be "justified" on "historical grounds." (I apologize for the lapse into the jargon, which is unavoidable here.) One may hold the "objective" belief that no masses, anywhere, have ever had the farsightedness and the dedication to sacrifice themselves willingly over a period of decades to the "march of history" and the accumulation of a country's capital. No generation has been willing to let itself be ground into the dust for the sake of a future it would not live to see. Thus the expansion of capitalism was made possible, under capitalist dictatorship, by the exploitation of the enslaved masses of England, America, Japan, etc., and the description in *Das Kapital* of working class conditions in England a hundred years ago gives us the classic picture: degradation, child-labor, semi-starvation, the bloody crushing of workers' demonstrations, violent hostility to trade unionism, suppression of dissenting opinion, retention of political power by a tiny minority. In Russia there is no child-labor, and

the standard of living of the workers, though better than that of the English workers a hundred years ago, and improving (they have just announced a minimum wage law), is still among the lowest to be found among the great peoples. The other evils are still there, with additional ones, of yesterday and today, unknown to the England of Marx's time: the physical liquidation of millions of farmers, the frightful famine precipitated by the agrarian policy, the fastening of a worker to his job (medieval peonage, actually), the prohibition of emigration, the isolation from foreign sources of information, etc.

But according to the "historical," "objective" law, there was no other way of getting the job done. It was compulsion and exploitation, or failure.

Such could be, and probably is, the view privately held by the Russian leaders who have assisted in the long torture of the Russian people. Of course they will never say it publicly, or perhaps even to each other. They must pretend that the Russian people endured and endures its torments *enthusiastically*; and this is one of the most revolting features of the Communist myth, and a clue to its vicious intellectual immorality. For whereas the admonitions of capitalist exploiters to the workers was: "Be humbly content in the humble role God has assigned to you," that of the Communist dictators is: "How dare you suggest that you are not happy? How dare you suggest that you are not the masters? Sing and cheer at the top of your voices—or else!" Nor is it possible for the Communist leaders to admit for a moment that what capitalism has learned in various countries in its partial evolution toward the concept of the welfare state might well have helped Russia to avoid in considerable measure the crimes and tragedies of primitive capitalism.

So much, briefly and imperfectly, for a rationale of the Communist leaders' unadmitted position on the condition of the Russian workers. It may not be correct, but it has a measure of reason in it. It makes some kind of sense, and it would explain, among other things, the comparative silence of the Russian leaders on the sufferings of the Russian masses under the Stalinist regime. Here they were in agreement with Stalin's methods, and if they are instituting some changes it is because they cannot help themselves. Something

like the breaking point was being reached—and even so the concessions will still be minimal, as they were with early capitalism when the breaking point was approached there.

But it is not so easy to construct a tentative rationale of "Stalinist" anti-Semitism, or to surmise to what degree the present Russian leaders acquiesced in that too. (Am I permitted to quote here Khrushchev's recent witticism, as reported in the capitalist press, that "a Kovalsky of the second grade is worth more than a first-class Rosenbloom," or his observation in Poland: "Too many Abramovitchs here." [*Tzukunft*, September 1956.] Or will I be met with a howl: "Lies! All lies!")

WHAT puzzles me most about Communist anti-Semitism is that in the last analysis it must rest on what is to the Communist mind the ultimate sin, the last intellectual abomination, namely, a *mystique*. I have defined Communist anti-Semitism as "a feeling of hostility toward the Jewish identity *however it manifests itself*, a hostility apparently accompanied or prompted by the belief, or notion, that as long as a Jew accepts the label of Jew he must have in him something that is bad for Communism." The italicised words are of central importance. For me it is a truism that a man may know himself to be a Jew, i.e., know that his parents were called Jews, and yet may have in him nothing of the Jewish tradition. It is a truism that a man may write in Yiddish or Hebrew and yet be non-Jewish or anti-Jewish in his essential outlook, and as fit for Communism as the member of any other group or people. It is incomprehensible to me when a Nazi says that a Jew writing Yiddish or Hebrew cannot be non-Jewish or anti-Jewish; but I can put my finger on his hallucination. When a Communist says so I am baffled.

But that devoted Jewish Communists were liquidated by Communist anti-Semitism is now admitted by the Russian leadership. It does not help us to be told that this is *not* Communist anti-Semitism, a thing which does not exist, that it was something done by Communists in an off-moment, in a moment of aberration or deviation. The present Russian leadership was "in" on that moment of aberration, just as it was "in" on the oppression of the Russian masses. It denies that the Russian masses were or are oppressed—and

it goes on oppressing them; it denies just as scornfully that "Stalinist" anti-Semitism can be reconciled with true Communism. Of what value is the denial? We may be sure that the present Russian leadership dissociates itself from the tyranny which decimated its ranks, and here alone one trusts it.

To bring my basic problem into sharper relief I shall quote a particular case—that of the poet Itzik Feffer, who was on a visit to America during the days when Russia was building up the anti-fascist front on the foundation of her avowed enmity to anti-Semitism.

Among the strange, almost unbelievable manifestations of Stalin worship none has come to my attention that is quite as strange and nearly unbelievable as the poem written in praise of Stalin by Itzik Feffer. I offer below a partial translation, and for the benefit of the curious (or the suspicious—and I do not blame them) I append a transliteration of the original verses:

When I say Stalin, I mean beautiful,
I mean being everlastingly happy,
I mean never knowing henceforth,
Never knowing henceforth such a thing
as pain.

*Zog ich Stalin, mein ich shein,
Mein ich eibig gliklich sein,
Mein ich keimol shoin nit vissen
Shoin nit vissen fun kein pein.*

When I say Stalin I mean myself,
I mean infinite good fortune,
I mean never knowing henceforth
of a closed door.

*Zog ich Stalin mein ich mir,
Mein ich mazel on a shier,
Mein ich keimol shoin nit vissen
Fun a tzugemachte tir.*

When I say Stalin I mean May,
I mean days that are new;
All the paths are open,
All men are free.

*Zog ich Stalin, mein ich Mai,
Mein ich teg vos seinen nai;
Alle vegen seinen offen,
All menchen seinen frei.*

When I say Stalin I mean good,
When I say Stalin I mean courage,
I mean sparkling eyes,
I mean the never-resting.

*Zog ich Stalin mein ich gut,
Zog ich Stalin mein ich mut,
Mein ich fünkendike oigen,
Mein ich keinnol nit gerut.*

When I say Stalin I mean urge,
Hearts full of singing,
How can one talk of old age
When youth is on the march?

*Zog ich Stalin mein ich drang,
Fulle hertzer mit gesang,
Vos mir elter, ver mir elter,
Ven die yugend is in gang.*

When I say Stalin I mean storm,
When I say Stalin I mean joy,
I mean love, I mean hate,
I mean bearing forward.

*Zog ich Stalin mein ich broiz,
Zog ich Stalin mein ich freid,
Mein ich leben, mein ich hassen,
Mein ich trogen sich forois.*

When I say Stalin I mean Yes,
Wherever you call me I am there;
You are my today, you are my
yesterday,
You are my hour of tomorrow.

*Zog ich Stalin mein ich yo,
Ven du rufst mich bin ich do,
Bist mein heint un bist mein nechten,
Bist mein morgendikke sho.*

THIS effusion should have placed the present Russian leadership in a quandary. There was no charge against Itzik Feffer when he was liquidated—at least, none that is now admitted as valid. Therefore he had to be “rehabilitated.” On the other hand he is obviously a shocking example of the deviation which goes by the name of “the cult of the personality.”

I should like to pause over this curious phrase, which has now become part of an international jargon. “The cult of the personality” has a rather pedantic ring. It sounds like an academic denial of the role of the individual in history. We would imagine that in it we are dealing with two respectable schools of thought, one of which, however, happens to be in the wrong. But what we are dealing with here, under this mealy-mouthed phrase, is not a respectable thing. The attitude toward Stalin was not simply an expression of

“the cult of the personality.” It was one of the most abominable instances of the debasement of humanity that we have in recorded history. It was a groveling and crawling and slobbering before an implacable and bloodthirsty tyrant which it is impossible to recall without horror. (Khrushchev wept . . .) And that the groveling and crawling and slobbering was sometimes voluntary—I assume it was in Feffer’s case, from the note of nauseating sincerity in the Yiddish original—made it all the more terrifying.

Feffer’s hysterical practice of “the cult of the personality” *should* have placed the Russian leaders in a quandary. If it did, they had to conceal it, having themselves been culpable, though under duress. (Parenthetically, “though under duress” is misleading here; little people may plead duress, not leaders.) But more relevant to my question is the fact that though Feffer wrote in Yiddish—and it would have been the same if he had written in Hebrew, like Moshe Sneh—he was un-Jewish through and through in what he wrote. He was, indeed, anti-Jewish; for what we have here is genuine idolatry, *avodah zarah*, as repugnant to the Jewish being as the worship of the blue-faced Egyptian ape of Horus or of the Assyrian bull.

How, then, was it possible to vent one’s anti-Semitism on Feffer and his like? And what did that anti-Semitism mean? We are apparently confronted with a mysticism as impenetrable as that of the Nazis, but in this case it is a mysticism of linguistics rather than of race. The implication is that the use of Yiddish or Hebrew unfits a man for Communism.

One may add rather naively that it is all very unscientific, and Communism is supposed to be *the* scientific approach to the problems of humanity. How did a “scientist” like Stalin (and by Stalin I mean the entire group of Communist anti-Semites) reconcile such sentiments or convictions with the body of his philosophy? But then, how did the real scientists of Russia reconcile their adulation of Stalin as a *scientist* with the body of *their* philosophy?

The reader will perhaps think that I am carrying the question too far. I refer him to “The Proceedings of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences of the U.S.S.R., Session of July 3-August 7, 1948, Verbatim Report,” published in Eng-

lish by the Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1949, which I discuss at some length in Chapter Nineteen of *Level Sunlight*. I quote here one of a number of similar statements made by the assembled scientists. "Agricultural science must be developed in the way we are bidden to do by the great coryphaeus of science, our teacher and leader, Comrade Stalin." What went on in the minds of these scientists, *qua* scientists, at the time?

LET US put the scientific aspect of the problem on one side and proceed to another aspect, equally bewildering. If the Communists are not scientific they are at least supposed to be realistic. The "realism" of Communists is, in fact, one of the articles of faith of modern man, to which even anti-Communists cling with pathetic tenacity. We are again confronted with that formula: "Say what you like about the Communists, but you have to admit they are realists. . . ." Very well; how much "realism" is there in Communist anti-Semitism?

"Realistically" appraised, Nazi anti-Semitism was a superb piece of strategy. The internal cost to Germany was not inconsiderable. There was, for instance, a loss in scientific and other skilled personnel which Germany could well have used. But the offset was enormous. The use of anti-Semitism by the Nazis, first, to acquire power, second, to consolidate Germany round a ferocious myth, third, to demoralize the world's democracies, was on a realistic level which would have roused the admiration of Macchiavelli. It may be true that the realistic and the insane became inextricably mingled, a familiar pathological phenomenon; there still remains, however, a powerful residue of the realistic.

How does it stand in this respect with Communist anti-Semitism? The political value of anti-Semitism to the Nazis depended on its openness. It had to be proclaimed at home and propagated abroad. The anti-Semitism of the Communists was domestic and furtive. It had to proclaim itself the world enemy of anti-Semitism while it indulged in repression and murder of Jews in Russia (cf. its championing of the workers of the world and its oppression of the workers at home). What possible advantage to Communism did this represent?

One can understand Communist enmity to Zionism as "an instrument of imperialism." One can understand Communist enmity toward Jews who maintain, in one form or another, the Jewish tradition, which is anti-Communist. But how is one to understand a blanket hostility to Jews who happen to have been born Jews, when there are among them large numbers completely devoid of Judaism?

Was it perhaps a kind of mass condemnation which could not be bothered administratively with distinctions, a "to-hell-with-all-of-them-anyhow-that'll-be-the-safest-policy"? Or was it, to repeat, a Nazi belief that a Jew is constitutionally and genetically anti-Communist whatever his training, upbringing, beliefs and protestations? In Proust Madame de Gallardon says to the Princesse des Laumes: "I know he [Swann] is a converted Jew, and all that, and his parents and grandparents before him. But they do say that the converted ones are worse about their religion than the practicing ones, that it's all just a pretence." Is this the Communist anti-Semitic view? Then what about Karl Marx? Will they wind up by declaring, as the Nazis did of Jesus, that he was really an Aryan "according to the flesh"?

Of one reaction to these reflections I am quite sure if they fall into certain hands. "Oh you, and your Jewish obsession, your King Charles's head. Have you got nothing more important to think about?" But it is really not the Jews I am primarily concerned with here. I am concerned with the world's attitude toward the Jews, and more particularly with the problem of anti-Semitism among Communists. And I am wondering what the specialists on Russia and Communism could tell us about it.

By EUGENE LYONS

THE verbal violence of the denunciation of Stalin by his inheritors, at the 20th Party Congress and after, has tended to conceal the extreme caution with which the indictment was drawn. In the inventory of crimes and blunders charged against the dead dictator, the omissions are even more significant than the items listed and condemned. While crimes of relatively minor magnitude were played up, some of the most massive and hideous obscenities

were ignored and in effect condoned by silence.

We can easily recognize the basis of selection. Khrushchev and his associates confessed and attacked only aspects of Stalinism which they wished or were compelled to avoid in the future. But they soft-pedaled or remained entirely silent on those Stalinist policies and methods, however "illegal" or "un-Leninist," that they intended to retain in their arsenal of weapons.

Mr. Samuel is mistaken in supposing that "the Communists themselves no longer deny" that anti-Semitism "manifested itself in the highest echelons of the Communist leadership." Communists in Poland and in the free world may admit the facts, but not the Soviet hierarchy itself. Even in rehabilitating some of the Jewish victims, there has been no admission of the real nature of the injustice being rectified. Neither at the 20th Congress nor in the Soviet press has there been a forthright confession and renunciation of official anti-Semitism.

The silence has remained unbroken despite pressures from foreign Communist parties (the American among them) and highly valued foreign friends of the regime for a frank and unambiguous statement on the issue. This is the more remarkable at a time when the new "line" calls for appeasement of the non-Communist Left and liberals. Surely Moscow has much to gain from a clear-cut break with anti-Semitism. It is aware that the supposed "abolition" of this malignity was for decades the last bulwark of apologists for the Soviet system; that Jews play a large role in the world Communist movement and especially in its peripheral deployments of sympathizers; that racism in the homeland of Communism can be a serious handicap in wooing the darker races of Asia and Africa.

How easy it would be for Stalin's successors to make him the scapegoat for one more distortion of true Leninism and denounce anti-Semitism as a bourgeois abomination! How tempting the move must be! Yet the new hierarchs remain stubbornly, irrationally, silent and sullen on the issue. They will concede that Jews, too, suffered from the cult of personality, but not that they suffered especially and uniquely as Jews.

All of which seems to me ominous for

the future. It suggests that the Kremlin considers anti-Semitism too valuable an instrument of power to be jettisoned. It is prepared to risk "misunderstanding" by elements abroad whom it would lure into new united and people's fronts rather than acknowledge that anti-Semitism is *per se* evil and incompatible with Marxism-Leninism. Vague denials of anti-Semitism such as Comrade Furtseva offered when questioned about it must suffice for the outside world, while its potential is kept intact at home.

What led the Stalin regime, beginning in the late 1930's, to make anti-Semitism state policy? Whatever the reasons, real or fancied, the current rulers obviously still consider them valid.

These reasons assuredly will not be found in Communist doctrines. The analysis of any aspect of Kremlin behavior in terms of ideology or *Weltanschauung* has long since become a fruitless exercise. Necessity or what the rulers so consider, the crudest kind of political opportunism, takes precedence over principle and reason, with just enough semantic disguise to save face for the leadership.

When necessary, all Hungarians, workers and Communists included, are arbitrarily defined as fascists. All peasants, no matter how poor, who resist collectivization, are defined as kulaks. All party members, not excepting the founding fathers, who do not fit into the latest Kremlin line are defined as enemies of the people. By the same primitive illogic all Jews, including ardent Communists and Jews who have long forgotten that they are Jews, are defined as cosmopolitans or Zionists or imperialist agents when the regime considers it desirable.

The procedure is quite consistent with Communist ideas of efficiency and firmness, in that it means the liquidation of actual or "objective" enemies "as a class." That was how the Kremlin dealt with kulaks, with party dissidents, with the "old intelligentsia," and that is how it dealt (and apparently wishes to remain in a position again to deal) with Jews as a class. Fine distinctions among the members of a condemned group would be weakness, bourgeois sentimentality and rotten liberalism, all unworthy of "iron Bolsheviks." To spare the innocents, to salvage useful exceptions, would be out of

character for the kind of Communists who, by the process of selection of the toughest and most ruthless, had come to rule the land.

THE incidence of Trotskyism, or whatever the going label for anti-party sentiment, had been strikingly high among Jews. The same historical and psychological factors which had made Jews disproportionately active in the revolutionary movement before 1917 tended to make them unhappy and restive as new dimensions of injustice and absolutism prevailed under Communism. Whether or not it was "the tradition of individualism" to which Mr. Samuel alludes, the Jews came once more to be regarded by tyrannical overlords as non-conformists, nay-sayers, potential rebels.

A new Russian nationalism was gaining ascendancy. Try as they might, the Russian Jews, Communists or not, found it hard to work up convincing enthusiasm for a historical past marked by Pales and pogroms, for national heroes like Ivan the Terrible and Khmel'nitsky. The Soviet Union was turning inward, cutting the last cultural ties with the outer world. But too many Jews found complete mental and spiritual divorce from the non-Soviet world beyond their strength. They had, to put the matter on the most elementary basis, relatives abroad. They could not quite exorcise their strange interest in Jews in other countries and in the Western culture to which Jews had made great contributions.

Thus Stalin and his cohorts had long looked upon the Jews in their midst, even the Jews in their party, with a baleful eye. They reached a point when it seemed to them useful, perhaps even unavoidable, to crack down on Jews as a class, to destroy their influence. If in the process some first-rate Stalinists would be killed off, if some valuable manpower—brilliant officials, artists, scientists, administrators—would be destroyed, it was the sort of "sacrifice" that tough, unsentimental "human engineers" could take in stride.

The Kremlin did not, as Mr. Samuel surmises, want the Jews assimilated and *Spurlos Versenken*, for then they would carry their faults into the larger social fabric. Who could be more fully assimilated and "sunk" than Trotsky and Zino-

viev, Kamenev and Radek, but did that stop them from behaving "like Jews"? No, the Kremlin wanted the Jews clearly identified, stripped of Russianized names and even of the protective coloration of Communist patriotism, so they could be watched and made harmless.

The decision to launch official anti-Semitism came the more easily because not only "the party rabble" but the party elite were themselves anti-Semitic in any case. Besides being Communists they were creatures of their country and their time, and it was a time in Russia when the inherited hatred and distrust of Jews had grown and deepened under the impact of Soviet conditions. The very fact that, year after year, thousands of Communists had to be expelled in the party purges for anti-Semitic conduct—this at the time when the regime was still fighting the disease—is an indication of how widely it had spread.

Why anti-Semitism flourished under the Soviets and despite the Kremlin's early campaigns against it is an interesting subject which I have not the space here to develop. Suffice it that popular opinion tended to make the Jew the scapegoat for the great wretchedness, suffering and terror, though he was as wretched and terrorized as the rest. A lot of circumstances conspired to build the myth, among large segments of the masses, that Communism was somehow a Hebraic abomination. As late as 1934, simple-minded Russians smiled ironically when I tried to convince them that Lenin, or even Stalin, was not a Jew.

The ordinary mortal did not meet the government in commissars and high officials. He met it personally in petty functionaries, in pen-pushing clerks behind little windows; and these, unhappily, were likely to be Jews because they were the one literate minority in a largely illiterate population. In an era of universal shortages, the retail shop was the focus of popular vexations and despairs, and there again the Jew took the brunt of it. By reason of his trading background, he often became a store manager or counter clerk. For these and a long array of other causes, the cancer of anti-Semitism grew apace.

IN THE early Soviet years, when its conduct could properly be appraised in

the context of principles and *Weltanschauung*, the Kremlin fought anti-Semitism, in honesty, as part of the Czarist heritage to be extirpated. After Communist idealism had ebbed, leaving only the muddy dregs of cynicism and power, it continued the fight out of necessity. The new anti-Semitism was so self-evidently an emotional euphemism for anti-Communism, an indirect and safer expression of hostility to the whole Soviet business, that the dictators had little alternative.

But gradually the ruling group began to wonder whether it might not be expedient to meet the anti-Jewish mood half-way. The Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939 provided the alibi of political necessity to speed up the process. The tragic degree to which anti-Semitism had prospered in the Soviet years was underlined by the German invasion. Of the ideological baggage brought in by the Nazis, only its Jew-hatred met with what Solomon L. Schwartz has called "staggering success." In most places the approach of the conquerors was a signal for attacks on Communists and Jews.

Let me quote from an article I published six years ago:*

"When the war ended—and here, I believe, we are close to the heart of the motivations of official anti-Semitism—the Kremlin apparently decided to accept and exploit the malicious force it had been unable to curb or control. Having failed to achieve unity with the people on the higher levels of loyalty to the regime or Communist ideology, it now sought identification with the masses on the lowest levels of their primitive prejudices. In a perverted fashion Stalin chose to come closer to his subjects by pandering to one of their worst moods.

"Native anti-Semitism had been inflamed by Nazi propaganda; some 70 million Russians, it should be remembered, lived for longer or shorter periods under Hitlerism. It could be turned into a convenient lightning rod to draw at least part of the mass discontents away from the Soviet masters. Was not the best answer to the libel that the Soviet regime was 'Jewish,' openly to restore anti-Semitism as state policy? If Stalin could not bring back the best features of the Czarist past, he could

at least bring back one of the worst."

That Khrushchev, like Stalin, looks upon Jews as basically "unreliable" is indicated by his recent expulsion of Jews from certain sensitive frontier areas, precisely as Stalin had done in his time. His anti-Jewish remarks, drunk or sober, may stem from sheer prejudice but they reflect the political rationale that Jews "as a class" are a menace to Communist power. Under the circumstances, he and his confreres regard as humanist nonsense any demand, even by fellow-Communists abroad, that they discard anti-Semitism. It is, after all, one of the few things about the regime that finds substantial popular consent.

By EARL BROWDER

MAURICE SAMUEL's communication raises serious and difficult questions. With some the difficulty is inherent, in others semantic. A semantic difficulty is raised, for example, in the statement: "The issue is the nature of Communist anti-Semitism." This assumes many types of anti-Semitism, each of a distinct nature. I cannot join that assumption. To me anti-Semitism is a disease, analogous to small-pox on the biological plane, with the same "nature" wherever it appears, and different in time and place only in its degree of virulence. When I hear of small-pox somewhere, perhaps Keokuk, I do not inquire as to the nature of Keokuk small-pox, I inquire into the condition of that town's public health program.

There is no doubt that virulent anti-Semitism has afflicted the Soviet Union recently, both among the masses and in official circles. There is much doubt that it has any special "nature" to require special analysis; more fruitful would be an inquiry into the conditions of public political health.

The infection in Russia is unquestionably a relic of the old Russia, where it was virulent and endemic. The Revolution of 1917 declared war against it, and Soviet law set itself to combat and extirpate it. This policy achieved a notable measure of success for many years, that was almost universally recognized. When this disease re-appears in Soviet Russia after World War II, the question is not where it came from. This is no mystery, it is a survival

* "Anti-Semitism in Utopia," *The Freeman*, Dec. 11, 1950.

of the old Russia. The only mystery is, why did the old disease germs again find favorable conditions to multiply, and emerge in an epidemic?

Obviously the Soviet's war against anti-Semitism had long ceased, and there had been a more or less prolonged period of tacit tolerance of anti-Semitic views, before there began a revival and finally an epidemic of the disease. There is not too much difficulty in tracing this process in publicly recorded facts.

But this revived anti-Semitism shows a difference, not in its nature, but in its environment. There still remained some anti-toxin in the social blood-stream from the period of war against the disease. That is why, in contrast with the anti-Semitism of old Russia which was open and arrogant, flaunting itself before the world, the re-emerging anti-Semitism kept itself as secret as possible, it was *shame-faced*, it slunk and hid itself. It was virulent as ever, but preferred the dark, knowing that exposure to the light of day would probably mean its end.

Mr. Samuel raises many questions directed toward finding, if any, those points in socialist ideology which encouraged or promoted this re-emergence of anti-Semitism.

In my opinion there is only one point at which such a connection can be found. That is the point of a *general decay and fragmentation of the ideological life*. The decay became manifest right after the war, though its roots go much farther back. Its causes are too complex to state in this brief letter. It showed itself clearly, however, in an attempt, as it were, to *militarize* the whole field of ideology and culture, carried out in the name of the whole Russian leadership by the individual Andrei Zhdanov. A few rigid and simple dogmas were raised as the infallible guide to public life of all sorts, and ideology was deposed; free discussion was replaced by "directives" of authority; even music prostrated itself before the new god with servile thanks for its "inspiration." Ideology was dismembered.

I have heard of a few attempts to locate in the work of Karl Marx some "ideological roots" for the rise of anti-Semitism in Soviet Russia. In my opinion these are worthless and contemptible. The young Germanized Jew who was to become the

historical Karl Marx, in the course of settling intellectual accounts with inherited Jewishness, wrote some sharp, stinging, not always "fair," criticisms of that tradition from which he was separating himself while raising it to a higher plane. But it is nothing short of obscurantism to interpret Marx's struggle with his own limiting Jewishness in any anti-Semitic sense.

Particular doctrines of Marxism may have, some certainly have, become obsolete. But Marx himself was an anti-dogmatist, and often said "I am no Marxist," not in repudiation of his own thought, but against the attempts to imprison it in doctrine and dogma. If he is now "antiquated," this must be understood in the sense that Isaac Newton is antiquated; to operate today exclusively with Newton's formulas in physics or mathematics is to be a reactionary, but this does not displace Newton as one of the giants of human progress. We must understand Marx in the same sense.

A DIFFERENT sort of problem is that of Stalin, raised by Mr. Samuel. The decay and fragmentation of Soviet ideology, from which re-emergence of anti-Semitism became possible, was both cause and effect of the rise of Stalin to hold a monstrous centralization of power. It is irrelevant to this discussion whether the individual Stalin personally guided this revival of anti-Semitism, or to what degree. What we know is sufficient, that Stalin was himself created and shaped by Russian society before he did any "shaping" of that society on his own account. Attempts to explain evil features of Soviet society exclusively in terms of Stalin and "the cult of personality" are as empty and futile as the old worship of Stalin as the Sun-God, and give the old cult in reverse.

Modern appearances of anti-Semitism as a major political phenomenon have usually, perhaps always (and perhaps originally), been in circumstances where powerful rulers, under attack by discontented peoples, attempt to divert their wrath to a scapegoat, by pointing out the "real enemy" in a minority (preferably small) of the population itself, which is supposedly causing the current difficulties by secret means. Soviet leaders had with difficulty emerged from the war, in which the people suffered intolerable hardships (they

are now told partly through Stalin's faults), and after the war these hardships continued because of the Cold War (again they are now told partly through Stalin's fault). Discontent was deep and threatening. Under such circumstances there is not the slightest need to speculate about an "ideological basis" for the rise of Soviet anti-Semitism, to think that Soviet leaders "feel" or have the opinion that "as long as a Jew accepts the label of Jew he must have in him something that is bad for Communism." No rulers ever stirred up anti-Semitism because they themselves had a bad opinion of the Jews; they may even love the Jews, but be ready to sacrifice them to retain their own power, just as they would sacrifice their own wives and children. The use of anti-Semitism by uneasy rulers requires no particular opinions at all, but only a certain degree of cynicism. If anyone demands that this be made any more "rational," and furnish the instigators of anti-Semitism with a whole *weltanschauung* out of their own imaginations, it may all be very interesting and instructive in a way, but I much fear it is the entrance to a maze from which there is no exit. All that is needed is uneasy rulers, discontented people, a high degree of cynicism, and a potential scape-goat, easy to identify and distinguish from the mass. . . .

The dilemma of the Soviet scientific conscience in face of anti-Semitism was, of course, very painful. It was but one phase of a larger dilemma, in which the geneticists were forced to bow low before Lysenko, the economists to speak absurdities about Eugene Varga's book and Varga to recant the points on which he was most obviously correct, and so on; in which real scientists had to keep silent while fakirs filled the scientific journals with claims of how and when Russians first invented the airplane, radio, baseball and what-have-you. The Russian scientific conscience, which is just as real and healthy as its American counterpart, was outraged, of that there is no doubt. But scientists are only indirectly revolutionists, by the results of their work, not by challenging the powers that be. They retreated into their shells, much as most American scientists did for a time under the thunderbolts of Joe McCarthy, and hoped for better weather.

By GREGOR ARONSON

I PROCEED from the premise that we are not here discussing the general problem of anti-Semitism, which is an ancient one, possessing deep historical roots in antique racial and religious superstitions and a broad basis in various classes of various peoples, "backward" and "civilized" both.

This anti-Semitism always had firm popular roots in Soviet Russia, even when the Soviet dictatorship outlawed its overt expression. From all indications this popular anti-Semitism in Russia—particularly in the Ukraine—had intensified by the end of World War II in areas that had been occupied by the Nazis. The Jew-hating venom of Nazism had managed to infect many a Russian soul, and it may be said that Russia emerged from the war against Hitler more anti-Semitic than it had been.

But we are not here concerned with the general popular anti-Semitism, but with that of the ruling class, of the Communist elite, of the government-economy-party-army machinery. In other words, we are concerned with a relatively new phenomenon, with the anti-Semitism streaming not from below but from above, a product not of an elemental process but of a carefully premeditated policy on the part of the Communist regime. This Communist anti-Semitism is a phenomenon that has not yet been adequately explained. Mr. Samuel rightly reminds us that until a short time ago this subject was taboo, that any attempt to touch upon it met with almost universal rebuff.

A personal experience of mine apropos of this may be worth recounting. In 1944, during World War II, the Jewish Socialist Farband in America published my book, *The Jewish Problem in Soviet Russia*. Analyzing the policy of the Communist dictatorship toward the Jews, I devoted several pages to documenting the anti-Semitism of the high Communist echelons, which was then already quite evident to observers of the Russian scene. Interestingly, because of the publisher's taboo, I had to expurgate these few terrible pages (I still have them, in galley form). Apparently these accusations were incredible during the war—at a time when Stalin was an integral part of the anti-Hitler alliance—accusations that Communism, too, was caught in the act; that Communism, which posed as world liberator, had also sunk to

most despicable and reprehensible Jew-baiting. . . .

Since that time, when so many were under the illusion that Communism, despite its brutal dictatorship and horrible crimes, could still become a more or less respectable system, it has become obvious to everyone that Communist anti-Semitism, stemming from above and bearing the official stamp of the government, was an indisputable fact. Those who refused to accept the view that contrary to their past and to their platform and outlook, Communists were in practice mimicking the anti-Semites, began to interpret the campaign against "cosmopolitanism" in Russia as a struggle against ideological "deviationism," and to shut their eyes to the irrefutable fact that all the alleged "cosmopolites" were actually Jews, solely and exclusively Jews.

In 1948-50 the entire Russian Jewish intelligentsia was liquidated. Even the most loyal—in their linguistic and cultural assimilation—members of the Communist party were expelled from the posts they had occupied in the vast Soviet bureaucracy. Inside of a few years the press, literature, the theater, the diplomatic corps and the various ministries had become virtually *judenrein*. Interestingly, some 100 Jewish generals alive in Russia at the war's end, who had been awarded the highest honors by the government, suddenly vanished from sight, exterminated, as it later turned out, by the government. Yet there were many people who still refused to acknowledge that this was anti-Semitism pure and simple.

In 1952, when the Slansky trial was staged in Prague, and it should have been clear to everyone that the Jews had been deliberately set up as the target, there were still some who denied that there was any anti-Semitic aspect to this tragic spectacle. At best they leaned to the view that the Slansky trial was directed against Zionism; that this was not an anti-Semitic but an anti-Zionist trial, because the Zionists and the State of Israel had become "tools of Anglo-American imperialism" which aimed at the destruction of Communism, Soviet Russia and the Soviet bloc.

ANOTHER argument intending to prove that Communism had nothing in common with traditional anti-Semitism was advanced not only by loyal fellow-

travelers of Moscow, but also by veteran anti-Semites the world over. The Russian emigre-monarchist press was particularly loud in advancing this argument. In their view, the liquidation of the Jewish cultural elite merely reflected an internal struggle in Communist ranks. It was a family fight, having no relation to the Jewish question. It was by mere coincidence that the deposed or liquidated Communists were Jews, a coincidence that was explained by the fact that many Jews were Communists, and that Jews often constituted a majority of the Communist leadership. Thus Communism itself in this view became a "Jewish matter."

There was scarcely any change of mind among the "nay-sayers" when the world was shocked by the "Doctors' Affair" staged by Stalin shortly before his death in the Spring of 1953. A majority of the doctors involved in, and the alleged leaders of, the "plot" to assassinate the leaders of the Communist party and the General Staff of the Red Army were Jews. Although the doctors were alleged to be in league with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which was branded an agent of American imperialism, there were still many who refused to acknowledge the anti-Semitic character of this Moscow "blood libel"—Stalin's final Communist act. "Communist anti-Semitism," it was still argued, was a contradiction in terms: dry water; cold fire. How could such a thing as anti-Semitism be linked to the Communist *Weltanschauung*, to a government of the workers and peasants?

After Stalin's death, when his heirs openly admitted the absurdity of the "Doctors' Plot," and the doctors who were still alive (two had died in prison, unable to withstand the torture) were set free, it was generally acknowledged that the entire affair had been a manifestation of Communist anti-Semitism. Now it became clear even to the skeptics that it was anti-Semitism—a policy directed against Jews—because the victims of this policy had been loyal Communists, tried and true children of the Bolshevik Revolution, who had nodded approval to every move of the Kremlin, the Cheka, the Politburo. It became incontrovertibly obvious when a dozen of the finest Jewish writers in Soviet Russia were put before the firing squad on August 12, 1952 (this tragic date became known just a few months ago, in connec-

tion with the "de-Stalinization" that took place at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in Moscow).

Now we come to the heart of the matter: How are we to explain Communist anti-Semitism? What are its causes? It is not enough to refer to Communist "theory" set down by Lenin in 1903 and "elaborated" by Stalin in 1913 when it was "established" that the Jews are no nation, that they have no future and that assimilation was their inevitable destiny. The tenuousness of this "theory" became clear even to its exponents immediately after the October Revolution, when they allowed the Communist party to create a special *Yevsektzia*, and permitted the development of a Yiddish-language cultural program and school system in the 1920's and 1930's, and promised the Jews their own "Jewish Republic in Birobidjan." This brief Soviet excursion into a "Jewish policy" is proof that Communist "theory" played no independent role here—though it must be said that it was later used to expedite the obliteration of the last trace of Jewish creativity in Russia and to force assimilation of the Jews wherever it was not organically taking place.

To return to the views of Maurice Samuel, I should like to stress that it is not correct to build upon the premise that the Jewish individualist spirit and the Communist outlook are mutually repellant. This concept sounds altogether metaphysical, and as Mr. Samuel himself later notes, it is contradicted by the fact that many—too many, perhaps—Jews at one time manifested a clear leaning toward Communism. Thus, anti-Semitism arose among the Communist elite not because they could no longer tolerate the presence and influence of Jewish individualism. What motivated the Communists towards anti-Semitism was something else altogether which will open our eyes to the unique nature of Soviet, or Communist, anti-Semitism.

Schematically speaking, I would formulate the situation as follows: Communist anti-Semitism is a planned, contrived, deliberate, systematically worked-out political device of the Soviet dictatorship. It is a political anti-Semitism intended to serve as a weapon in the political struggle being waged by the Communist apparatus. More plainly: the aims of this anti-Semitism are

political, though its effects may be identical with those of all other expressions of anti-Semitism, and though it may appeal to the same primitive biological and racist instincts. The uniqueness of Communist anti-Semitism is that it is political. To be sure, this makes it no pleasanter for the Jews, for whatever the motivation of anti-Semitism may be, its expression is equally painful to its victims.

THE political character of Communist anti-Semitism during Stalin's heyday was never overtly manifested. Let us recall, for example, the Stalin-Hitler pact, which set off World War II. The Communist dictatorship deliberately turned a blind eye to the Nazi policy of extermination. When the Nazis occupied Poland and two years later invaded Russian territory containing a population of some 60 millions, the Stalin regime continued its systematic silence on the Jewish tragedy. At the time I labelled Stalin's Jewish policy "a-Semitism." In 1949 I realized that it was but one step from a-Semitism to anti-Semitism. Somewhat belatedly we learned that anti-Semitism had long been present; that, for example, immediately following the liberation of the Ukraine, Khrushchev, Stalin's "eye" in the Ukraine, had amnestied all Ukrainian Hitlerists and officially sealed an armistice with those who actively assisted in the extermination of the Jews. Motives of morality, dictates of humanitarianism, are intrinsically alien to the Communist *Weltanschauung*. The only standard of Communist conduct, their *ultima ratio*, is political expediency. To be sure, the political motives dictating the "expediency" of their anti-Semitism may change overnight. One day anti-Semitism is dictated by the demands of Soviet domestic policy; the next day it is driven by the vagaries of foreign policy.

When the need arises, anti-Semitism becomes part of a malign propaganda that stoops to the lowest devices in inciting the masses against the Jews. How frequently in times of economic crisis has the blame been placed on the Jews, the weakest, most defenseless segment of the population. I have on hand some hundred essays of an outright anti-Semitic nature that appeared in the Soviet press in the early 1950's. And when expediency demands, a vicious agitation is set in motion against Zionism and against Israel, solely because Communist

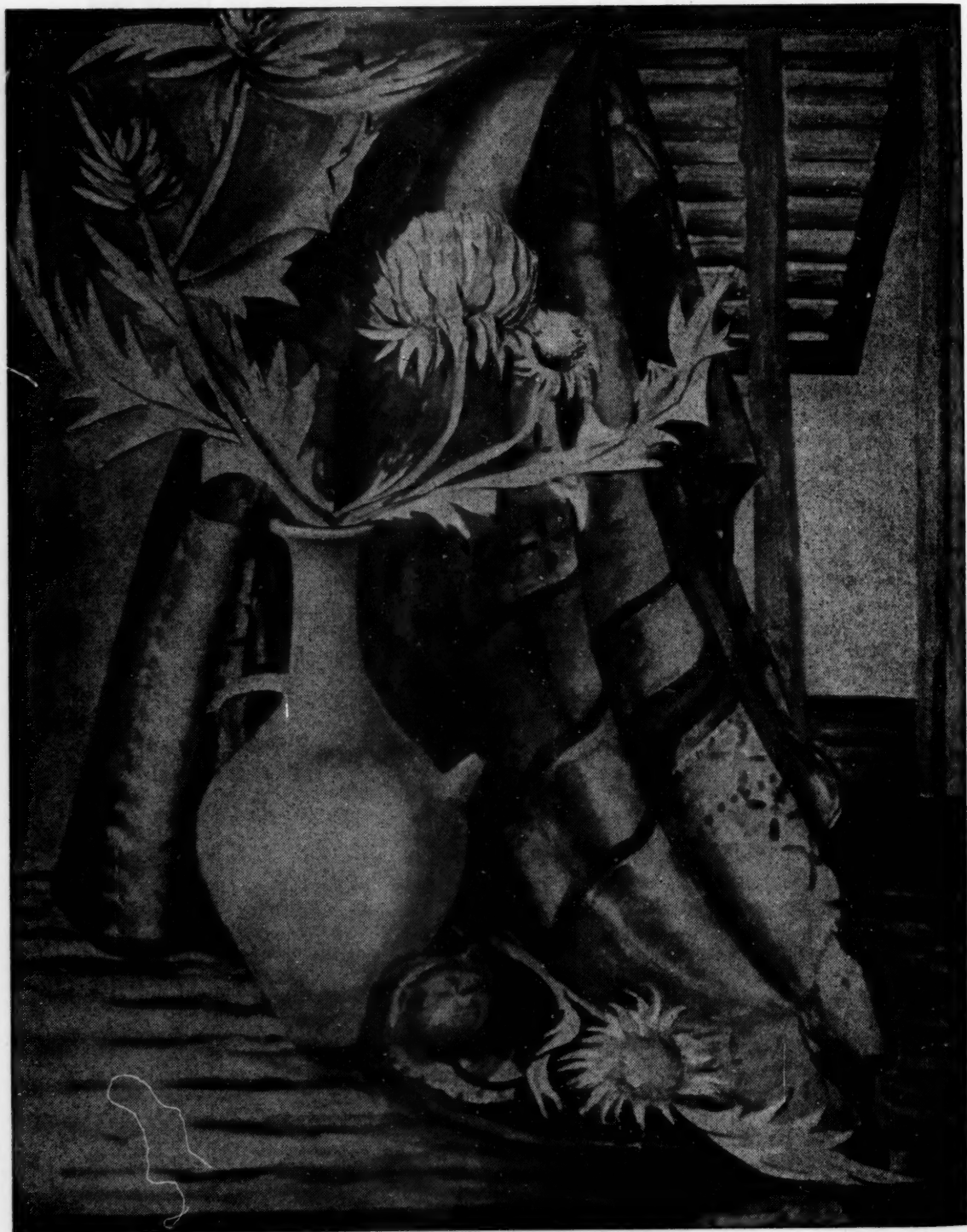
policy in the Near and Middle East demands the winning of Arab sympathy. Such is the interplay of motives arising from domestic and foreign policy.

More than once when relations between Soviet Russia and the West were tense, we witnessed a stepping up of the Communist anti-Jewish campaign. The reason is obvious: when "internal enemies" are needed, whose attitudes and links to the West are suspect, the Jews are always ready to hand. They are "Westerners," "Europeans," more so than any other group in Russia; they have relatives in the West, "from New York to Tel Aviv."

It might have been expected that with Stalin's death, and especially with the de-Stalinization that followed, there would be an end to anti-Semitism. But it did not turn out that way. This card, apparently, may still come in handy for Khrushchev and company. The dangerous game they are playing in Asia in recent months, the new split with the Western democracies

and the termination of the Geneva spirit compels the Kremlin rulers to hold fast to the anti-Semitic, anti-Jewish "ace-in-the-hole." This is evident from the tenor of Communist anti-Israel propaganda.

What of the fate of Russia's millions of Jews? This does not concern the Communist leaders. Khrushchev told the delegation of French Socialists that he advocates "forced assimilation" of the Jews. In other words, Russian Jewry will not in the near future be allowed to live a free cultural and national life. The Yiddish language will remain banned. Literature, press, schools or any form of Jewish cultural activity will not be allowed. And it should be emphasized that this type of policy is practiced only against the Jews. Other, smaller national groups in Russia are free to publish newspapers and books in their mother tongues—but not the Jews. In effect the Jews remain subject to the old monarchist edict: *Krome Yevreiev*, rights to all except the Jews.



Still Life, by Joel Rohr—Kfar Menahem, Israel

Spain is not the only country of Europe to have attempted to deal drastically and tragically with her "Jewish problem." The most recent experiences of the Jews in Hitler Germany furnish all too poignant a reminder of that fact. However, Spain is set apart from the other countries of Europe in this respect by the peculiar way in which she became involved in this problem. So "sensitive" was Christian Spain to the presence of the Jew within her borders that for at least two centuries after the expulsion of the Jews, she continued to struggle against what had become a mere phantom presence. In this article A. A. SICROFF tells the fascinating story of the "blood purity" statutes in 16th and 17th century Spain. Mr. Sicroff is a member of the Department of Modern Languages of Princeton University.

The Spanish Obsession

By A. A. SICROFF

BLOOD purity (*limpieza de sangre*) became a mania in Spain in the 15th century, with the result that after the middle of the 16th century there was hardly a secular or religious community in the country that would tolerate the presence of Christians of Jewish descent among its membership. Each community sought to adopt its own "pure blood statute" (*estatuto de limpieza de sangre*) providing for rigorous investigation into the ancestry of candidates for admission. So thorough were these investigations that even the most remote Jewish ancestors of Spanish Christians were unearthed in the course of them. Innumerable individuals were reminded of long forgotten Jewish forefathers, were labeled as "New Christians," "Conversos," or even "Jews" and were excluded from the company of "pure Christians." This zealous filtering of the blood of Spanish Christians had the effect of perpetuating the Jews on the Spanish scene long after they had been physically ejected from the country.

It is interesting to look into the origins of this obsession. How did it happen that such great numbers of Spanish Christians were found to be of Jewish origin? And how did it come about that the descendants of Jews converted to Catholicism found themselves excluded from Spanish Christian society? To answer these questions one must go back to the year 1391, the year which may be considered to have sealed the fate of the Jews in Spain.

Prior to 1391, Spain had had a long history of fluctuating attitudes toward her Jewish inhabitants. Under the Gothic kings, and later the Spanish kings of the Reconquest, the Jews were by turns victims of persecutions and beneficiaries of benign treatment which allowed them to prosper, culturally as well as economically. Although the attitude of the masses of Spaniards towards the Jews was not always in tune with that of the royal and ecclesiastical powers in Spain, it too fluctuated, so that while Jews were often the target of mass violence they also knew moments when

they were able to live on the most friendly terms with their Christian neighbors. This fluctuating cycle of Jewish fortunes in Spain was brought to a stop at the end of the 14th century when the attitude of the Spanish populace towards the Jews hardened. Whereas in the early part of this century the people of Spain had to be admonished against too friendly relations with the Jews, by 1391 they needed no such admonitions. Stirred by Ferrán Martínez, the Archdeacon of Ecija, popular passions swelled into a paroxysm of anti-Jewish violence in June of 1391. By mid-August the frenzy of massacre and pillage had spread to most of the Spanish provinces, including the island of Mallorca. The Jewish communities of Spain never recovered from the blows which descended upon them and the people of Spain never returned to anything resembling their former moments of benevolent treatment of their Jewish compatriots.

IN THE heat of the 1391 massacres, the only life-saving expedient offered to the Jew was that of Christian baptism. In Valencia alone the number of Jews who desperately grasped at conversion to Christianity to keep them from annihilation has variously been estimated between 7,000 and 11,000, with one estimate going as high as 100,000.

Given the fact that so many Jews were able to save their lives by receiving baptism, we must assume that, for the moment at least, they were not the target of racial feeling. At this time it was not their race or blood but their religion which identified them to their enemies. It was not at all extraordinary, therefore, that the Conversos who had formerly belonged to the higher strata of Jewish society, should upon their conversion occupy equivalent positions in Spanish Christian society. With their religious disqualifications re-

moved, there seemed to be no further obstacle to their full acceptance into all aspects of Spanish life. Thus, while 1391 can be considered to mark the beginning of the steady decline of the Jews in Spain which led to their final expulsion in 1492, there still remained a period of good fortune for the Judeo-Christians. Indeed, the latter were not only permitted to exercise the functions that formerly belonged to the Jews, but by their conversion they were now qualified to hold positions of importance in the Church itself. So it came about that in the first half of the 15th century the Conversos were artisans, merchants, tax farmers, doctors, just as their Jewish forefathers had been, and in addition they were now priests, monks and theologians. As such they reached the highest levels in the Spanish Church, acting as priors of monasteries and even attaining the heights of episcopal dignity.

Here we may cite the notable, though by no means exceptional, case of the Santa María family. This Judeo-Christian family was founded by Salomón Ha-Leví, the Chief Rabbi of Burgos. At the time of his conversion to Christianity—a conversion in which he also brought his children to the baptismal font, though he could not convince his wife to do the same—he assumed the name of Pablo de Santa María and within fifteen years he was back as the Bishop of Burgos. From this position he wielded extraordinary political power and even came to be named *Canciller Mayor* of Henry III and also one of the executors of the last will and testament of that Spanish monarch.

Don Pablo's son, Alonso de Cartagena, had a no less distinguished career. At the Council of Bale, Don Alonso was the spokesman for the delegation of Spanish churchmen and as such he defended the religious and secular preponderance of his country over England. There is a story, which may be apocry-

phal, about how Alonso de Cartagena presented claims to the assemblage showing that the seats of honor already occupied by the English delegation belonged to the Spaniards. After describing Spain's religious, economic and military superiority over England and after noting that England as an extra-continental nation could not claim the privileges enjoyed by the main body of European countries, Don Alonso is reported to have turned to his *alférez real* (Don Juan de Silva) with the words: "I have done my duty as a man of letters; your lordship must now act as a nobelman." Whereupon Don Juan de Silva and his Spanish cohorts forced the Englishmen to take seats on the left side of the hall while the Spaniards took over the places of honor on the right side. Whether or not this story is literally true is not of so much importance as that it could be told of the Converso Alonso de Cartagena, born a Jew. When his father Pablo de Santa María died, this same Don Alonso succeeded him as the Bishop of Burgos.

ASIDE from the ecclesiastical distinctions they attained, the Judeo-Christians performed services that gained for them the highest titles of nobility. They became counts, marquises and barons. From the vantage point of such exalted rank they soon were able to ally themselves by marriage to the most distinguished families of the Spanish aristocracy. One writer of the 15th century, Fernán Díaz de Toledo, tells us that within sixty years of the conversion of Solomón Ha-Leví, the blood of this Jew flowed in the veins of most of the important families of Castile, Aragon, Navarre and Portugal.

The period of unencumbered Judeo-Christian expansion into all areas of Spanish life was of relatively short duration. By the middle of the 15th century the populace was showing itself to be

far less enthusiastic than the ecclesiastical and secular hierarchy over the role being played by the Jews recently regenerated as New Christians. It has been suggested that the restlessness of the Old Christian populace vis-à-vis the Conversos is to be explained in terms of the former seeking a place of importance on the Spanish scene and finding that all their avenues of advancement were blocked by the Judeo-Christians, who monopolized the positions to which the Old Christians aspired. It might be added that the Conversos made a too rapid ascent in the Spanish social scale, before the memory of their Jewish ancestry could be obliterated. The grumbling masses could still point to the prospering Conversos as "Jews" who were usurping functions the former considered to belong to them as Old Christians. In this identification of the Converso as a Jew, the Spanish masses were supported by the fact that he was indeed frequently found to be relapsing into the religion of his Jewish forefathers. This phenomenon should, of course, come as no surprise when we recall the circumstances under which the conversions of 1391 had taken place. The suspicions of the Old Christian masses about the religious fidelity of the New Christians were also given indirect confirmation by the writings of many of the New Christians themselves. Whether it was the zeal of the neophyte or the bad conscience of the renegade which moved them, the fact is that many Judeo-Christians (among them our Don Pablo de Santa María) turned most bitter pens against their former coreligionists. So black was the picture they drew of their former Jewish brethren that the Old Christians could hardly be blamed for assuming such perfidies as those attributed to the Jews were not really washed away by the waters of Christian baptism.

In such a climate tensions began to gather about the figure of the Converso and in the year 1449 the storm broke in Toledo. In January of that year, Alvaro de Luna, the favorite of John II, attempted to levy a compulsory loan of one million *maravedis* on Toledo to help finance the campaign against Aragon, which had been making incursions into Castile. The levy met immediate resistance among the people, who alleged that it violated the special immunities of Toledo. When Don Alvaro insisted that the urgent needs of the King took precedence over the alleged municipal privileges and appointed a wealthy Converso merchant to collect the tax, the Toledan caldron boiled over. The Old Christian masses raised the cry that they were being betrayed by the Conversos and descended upon the wealthy Judeo-Christian quarter of Toledo, burning and plundering until they had spent their fury. In the course of events they legislated the first pure blood statute of Spain, decreeing that no Converso should ever be permitted to hold any public office in Toledo.

The Toledan pure blood statute of 1449 was condemned by the King and by the most distinguished Spanish prelates and theologians of the time, but the idea of blood purity was not to be put down. Not even the authority of Pope Nicholas V could halt the anti-Converso movement in Spain. In subsequent years, the Old Christian masses showed themselves ever ready to move against the Conversos, sometimes on the most far-fetched pretexts, repeating the pattern of murder, plunder and destruction which always culminated in a pure blood statute.

Soon the obsession with blood purity began to assert itself in religious as well as secular life. The Order of St. Jerome was the first religious community to adopt a pure blood statute.

Perhaps because so many Judeo-Christians had found a refuge from the world among the Jeronymites, this order was at an early date subjected to doubts regarding the religious fidelity of its members and the possible need for circumscribing the role of those among them who were of Jewish extraction. In 1461, Alonso de Oropesa, himself a Converso of unquestionable fidelity to the Catholic religion, used his authority as General of the Order to ward off insinuations that came from the Franciscans. But with the passage of time it became impossible to resist the pure blood movement which was sweeping Spain, especially when it was discovered that the peculiar secluded monastic life of the Order of St. Jerome enabled many of its Judeo-Christian members to practice Jewish rites in secret. One case of judaizing which brought great shame on the Jeronymites involved the person of Fray García de Zapata, Prior of the monastery of La Sisla. This monk managed a rather daring conspiracy which enabled him to observe the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles every year. Feigning illness, Fray García and two other friars would be visited every September by two Jewish doctors who came ostensibly to treat the Prior. They would build the traditional Jewish tabernacle made of branches and leaves in the courtyard of the monastery and would explain the construction to the other monks by saying that it was done to bring solace to the "ailing" Fray García. This same Converso Prior was also later discovered to have been neglectful of the consecration while celebrating mass and to have shown disrespect for the sacrament of confession by always absolving the penitent with his back turned. For these sins, the Jeronymite Prior and the two monks who practiced Judaism with him were burned before the gates of the monastery. It was cases such as these—

and they were rather frequent between 1486 and 1488—which ultimately brought about the adoption of a pure blood statute in the Order of St. Jerome.

As the 15th century drew to a close, an increasing number of communities, secular and religious, were adopting pure blood statutes. In northern Guipuzcoa the citizens, who prided themselves on their pure Christian origins, adopted a statute prohibiting all Conversos from settling or marrying among them. This statute brought a rather bitter smile from Hernando del Pulgar, the chronicler of Ferdinand and Isabella and himself a Judeo-Christian. He observed that the Guipuzcoans were satisfied to send their sons to Court where they frequently served Converso masters, sometimes in the most menial capacities, yet would not deign to intermarry with those for whom they were content to act as lackeys! A further bit of irony is provided by the pure blood provision in the constitution of the stonemasons' guild of Toledo. They were forbidden to communicate the secrets of their craft to anyone who was not of "pure Christian ancestry," although nearly all members of the guild were themselves of Moorish origin!

The anti-Converso movement raged for almost a century before the Church of Toledo, the Church of the Primate See of Spain, adopted a pure blood statute. It might seem strange that the Archbishops of Toledo should have been among the last to protect their community from the "taint of impure blood," yet this was a result of the nature of the anti-Converso movement in Spain. The preoccupation with blood purity was plebeian in origin, even having some of the overtones of social revolution, for the title "Old Christian" was often invoked by the masses to challenge the privileges which the aristocracy enjoyed on the basis of their birth. Royalty, aristocracy and church hier-

archy strongly resisted the anti-Converso movement at first. The first outright royal approval given a pure blood statute was that of Philip II confirming the one adopted by the Church of Toledo. Significantly, it was an Archbishop of Toledo of plebeian birth who first brought such a statute to the Toledan Chapter.

THE Archbishop Juan Martínez Siliceo (*Siliceo* being a latinization of the very common *Guijarro*) was a man of humble peasant origin. Iron determination and limitless hard work earned him the recognition which brought him to the side of young Prince Philip as a preceptor. This had been but a stepping stone for his later nomination to the Archbishopric of Toledo and which ultimately was to earn for him a Cardinal's hat. With all his triumphs, Siliceo never seemed to rid himself of the irksome memory that he was after all of plebeian origin. This is indicated in the brief résumé of his life which he composed at his accession to the highest ecclesiastical dignity in Spain. In it, the only luster he could claim for his parents was that they were "Old Christians."

Siliceo's opportunity to take up the pure blood question presented itself shortly after his investiture as Archbishop of Toledo when a certain Dr. Fernando Jiménez presented pontifical letters from Pope Paul III entitling him to a canonry in the Church of Toledo. Siliceo quickly discovered that Jiménez was the son of a Converso who not long before had been seized by the Inquisition for Jewish practices and had aggravated his crime by fleeing inquisitorial jurisdiction to another land where he allegedly reverted openly to Judaism. In a letter to Paul III, Siliceo protested that the elder Jiménez had been penanced publicly in Toledo and that the memory of the affair was still

fresh among the people. The admission of the son of such an infamous father into the Chapter of Toledo would set an ominous precedent, declared Siliceo, and he went on to raise the specter of Spain's Primate Church being transformed, as he put it, into "another synagogue." He recalled that the inconstant and turbulent Jews had been scolded by Jesus for always seeking the first places in the synagogue and he alleged that St. Paul would not admit neophytes of Jewish origin to the episcopal dignity. These censures against the Jews were even more applicable now, he insisted, for they had become hardened in their evil ways, always seeking to put Moses before Christ. What could be more criminal than to receive such people into the the Temple God? Here a rather surprising argument broke from the pen of Siliceo: Why is it, asked the Archbishop, that a breeder of horses will not admit any but a thoroughbred animal into his stable, yet where this infamous race of Conversos is concerned there are those who would give them the best places in the Church even though their lips are still moist with the milk of their parents' recent religious perversity?

In refusing Jiménez a benefice in the Church of Toledo, Siliceo did not specifically impugn his fidelity to Christianity. But the Converso was rejected because he was, according to the Archbishop, more prone to slip into religious infidelity, a vice which he maintained begins to take root almost at birth. St. Paul's injunction that in Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile could not avail Jiménez here, for Siliceo declared that this equality applied only to the *spiritual* unity of Christianity and to the *spiritual* benefits of that religion rather than the temporal ones. Even under the Old Law, observed Siliceo, the unity of the faith did not mean that all were equal-

ly eligible to serve as ministers in the House of God. For, of the twelve tribes of Israel only one, the Levites, was chosen to officiate in the Temple.

With considerations such as these the Archbishop succeeded in having Jiménez denied the office. What must have been Siliceo's exasperation on seeing Jiménez transfer the title to his benefice to another Judeo-Christian who was already a canon of the Church of Toledo. The transfer was made, furthermore, to a certain Bernardino Zapata, direct descendant of a brother of Fray García de Zapata, whom we have already mentioned as the Jeronymite Prior of La Sisla burned for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in his monastery!

When in July, 1547 Siliceo moved to have the Toledan Chapter adopt a pure blood statute, he neither had, nor did he seem to need, the pretext that the Converso members of his community were relapsing into Judaism and thus bringing disgrace to the Primate See. Instead Siliceo justified his proposal for a pure blood statute on the basis of the preeminent position that the Church of Toledo occupied in Christendom. The Church of Toledo, declared the Archbishop, was second only to St. Peter's of Rome in wealth, power and the number of its ministers. It had even known the glory of a visitation from the Holy Virgin who had come accompanied by Angels to invest St. Ildefonso with a chasuble which now reposed in the reliquary of the Church of Oviedo. In so glorious an institution, therefore, it was only fitting, said Siliceo, that all dignitaries, including canons, chaplains and choir boys, be distinguished not only by their noble birth and learning but by an ancestry free from the stain of Jewish or Moorish blood. In voting this statute—which was passed by 24 voices to 10—the Chapter made it binding on all future dignitaries of the Church of Toledo. No one could be

permitted to take possession of a place of honor in the Church without first swearing to support the statute and never to seek any relaxation of its rigor from Pope or prelate, nor to make use of such relaxation even if it were offered *motu proprio*.

AS MIGHT be expected, the statute was greeted by a storm of protest from the Converso members of the Toledan Chapter and their outside supporters, many of whom were themselves Old Christians. The Dean del Castillo, a nobleman who counted among his ancestors royalty as well as Jews converted to Catholicism, lashed back at the plebeian Siliceo with the taunt that if any change was in order as regards the qualifications for ministers of the Church of Toledo, it might be more in accord with that church's eminent position to demand that all its ministers be of *noble* blood. The Dean was not loath to declare that it was the low-born rather than the Judeo-Christians who threatened to tarnish the grandeur and authority of the Toledan See. Bristling support for this view came in the form of letters from the University of Alcalá and from the Archdeacons of Guadalajara and Talavera, sons of the powerful Duque del Infantazgo, who demanded immediate nullification of the statute.

As the discussion over the pure blood statute grew more heated, the Church of Toledo became the scene of armed conflict. One Converso prebendary, Pedro Sánchez, went so far as to attend the altar during Mass dressed in a coat of armor and prepared to defend himself with a dagger which he carried at his side. By September of 1547 violence had spilled out of the Church and into the streets of Toledo, to the point that Prince Philip had to send an *alcalde de corte* to attempt to restore order. Meanwhile the Conversos were negotiating

with Rome to win Paul III to their side and it appeared that they were about to gain their point. After a long discussion, the Rota rejected the Toledan pure blood statute and prepared a Pontifical Brief nullifying it which Pope Paul signed. But the negotiator sent to Rome by Siliceo, one Diego de Guzmán, proved far shrewder than his opponents. He succeeded in getting the Pope to revoke the already signed Brief and had him issue another declaration approving the statute of Toledo. So cleverly did Guzmán operate that the new pontifical instrument arrived in Toledo before the New Christian negotiators in Rome were even aware of its existence!

But the conflict concerning the pure blood statute which Siliceo brought to the Toledan Chapter was not yet over. Prince Philip was not impressed with the validity of Pope Paul's Brief approving the statute, since it had been obtained in such irregular circumstances. In the absence of Charles V, the Prince ordered the execution of the statute held in abeyance. Siliceo then showed his fiber by disregarding the injunction of his former pupil and putting the statute into effect. Thus, when in 1555 Pope Paul IV gave his pontifical approval to the statute, he was merely confirming what was already an established practice in the Toledan Chapter. And when Siliceo reapplied to Philip in 1556 for royal confirmation of this statute, he not only was able to claim that he now had clear pontifical support for the measure but he also added that in recent years the pure blood statute he had instituted had *already* demonstrated its usefulness in the service of God. Philip granted Siliceo's request and the anti-Converso statutes in Toledo and elsewhere became, for practical purposes, part of the official policy of Spain. With very few exceptions, those communities that were still with-

out a pure blood statute hastened to institute one, and even vied with one another for the distinction of establishing the most severe rules to exclude Judeo-Christians. There were communities which not only refused to admit Christians known to be of Jewish origin but would not admit any individual about whom there might be a rumor that he had Jewish ancestors—even if such a rumor were known to be false!

The Church of Toledo had needed no pretext of religious infidelity to justify its statute. As a matter of fact, such a pretext would have been hard to find in the second half of the 16th century, in which there was a marked decline of reversion to Judaism among Judeo-Christians. Henry Charles Lea, the historian of the Spanish Inquisition, has noted that in Valencia, which had had a yearly average of thirty to forty Conversos condemned for judaizing by the Inquisition in the early part of the 16th century, there were only two such cases between 1550 and 1560. During the sixteen-year period 1575-1590 inclusive, there were only twenty-three cases of judaizing in Toledo. At Seville there was an *auto de fe* in 1565 and of the seventy-four penitents not one was a judaizer, nor was there any in the *auto* held in Cuenca in 1585 where twenty-one Moriscos were penanced.

DESPITE the sharp reduction in the number of Conversos convicted of relapsing into Judaism, the pure blood statutes were enforced with increasing severity in the latter part of the 16th century and during most of the 17th century. The implications of this increased preoccupation with blood purity in Spain, while the number of judaizing New Christians decreased, must not be overlooked. By the middle of the 16th century these statutes had taken on a new importance in Spain. Whereas in the 15th century they had been in-

stituted by the Spanish Old Christians as an instrument for delivering Spain from the hands of the Conversos—as a sort of second Reconquest directed against an *internal* enemy—in the latter part of the 16th century the statutes were the instrument for keeping intact the racial honor of Spanish communities as “pure Christian.” The Judeo-Christian was no longer present in Spanish society as a palpable element to be controlled. But the haunting memory of his presence could leave a mark of dishonor. Communities and individuals squirmed at the thought that they might be tainted by the Judeo-Christian “stain.” Secular and religious communities tried to ward off challenges to their reputation for blood purity with exaggerated claims that they had *always*—from the very first moment of their establishment—observed a statute which rigorously excluded impure Christians from their midst. Such claims were even made for the Inquisition by one Escobar del Corro in the 17th century, who declared that its pure blood statute had been the model for that of all other communities. He did not seem to be disturbed by the fact that many of the first Inquisitors, including the infamous Torquemada, had been of Jewish origin.* Actually, the

* The fact that so many Judeo-Christians should have been linked to the establishment of the Inquisition in Spain has most often been interpreted as a mark of the perverted zeal of the neophyte. But if we take cognizance of the growing Spanish obsession with blood purity in the 15th Century, a new light is cast on the significance of the establishment of the Inquisition. The latter was the Judeo-Christian's defense against the categorical penalty inflicted by the pure blood statutes. They were eager for some sort of inquiry into the religious fidelity of the Conversos which, having weeded out those guilty of relapsing into Judaism, would permit the faithful ones to enjoy full Christian status. Such was the hope of Alonso de Cartagena, writing as early as 1449 (*v. Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*, Manuel Alonso, ed., Madrid, 1943, p. 293).

Inquisition was one of the *last* communities to demand that its members be "pure" Christians.

The phantom presence of the Jew which so haunted the Spaniards from the second half of the 16th century onwards was perpetuated—in the absence of more material evidence—by a body of fantastic legends and notions which brought up to date certain reminiscences of earlier facts and legends concerning the Jew in Spain. The ancient picture of the Jew as a deicide was compounded with stories about Jews and Judeo-Christians who crucified Spanish children. One such story, which had great vogue in Spain and continues to be repeated there today even though it has been shown to be pure fabrication, is the legend of the martyrdom of the Santo Niño de la Guardia. The notion that the Jews failed to recognize Christ as the Messiah was perpetuated with stories describing how the Judeo-Christians continued to wait for their Jewish Messiah. They were pictured as believing that the Messiah they awaited was sojourning in an isolated place which no one could reach because of a certain insuperable river called the Sabbaticus. Some Judeo-Christians allegedly believed that the Messiah was living among the poor lepers in Rome, or that he was wandering over the globe in poverty and in misery in order to expiate the sins of the Jews. One Spanish writer, Diego de Simancas, the Bishop of Zamora, claimed he had it from a trustworthy source that the Spanish judaizing New Christians seriously maintained that the Messiah would come to Spain in the form of a fish, swimming up the Guadalquivir in order to escape the vigilance of the Inquisition.

The idea of Judeo-Christians constantly relapsing into the Jewish rites of their ancestors was perpetuated with preposterous legends, some of them quite ingenious and not without a cer-

tain literary merit. There is, for instance, the story of an unnamed monk of an unnamed Franciscan monastery who had been greatly revered as the oldest member of his house and who had been the confessor of most of the people of the village. After his death he was honored by being interred near the principal shrine of the church, a sign of respect which apparently was misplaced in this case because on three consecutive nights he was found lying on top of his tomb. A special meeting of the monastery was ordered by the Guardian to investigate the matter, at which gathering the cadaver appeared as the star witness. One writer, Balthasar Porreño, describes the scene as follows:

"... the Guardian said to him, Father Confessor, for three nights your body has appeared atop your tomb. Therefore in the name of your vow of holy obedience, I order you to state publicly what it is you are seeking and as a minister of God I entreat you to tell me the significance of your appearance. The dead man ... made a pirouette and fell to his knees and he said to the Father Guardian: I am the Confessor Friar So-and-So, whom you buried a few days ago and I am condemned to the depths of Hell because being a Jew I observed the Law of Moses while feigning to be a Christian. I was a false Friar and when I was ordained I had no intention of complying with the demands of the Church and I had no intention of absolving those who confessed with me nor did I do anything which was not directed towards the ancient religion of my ancestors. Thus I am justly condemned to eternal punishment and because God does not want my body, which has been condemned together with my soul, to wear the habit of Saint Francis, He has made me appear three times in order to give you an account of my life so that

you may take from me the habit which I undeservedly wear."

Thus, concludes the writer, this individual was stripped of his habit and he went off to the caverns of Hell.

With legends such as these, the suspicion was kept alive that no Converso, no matter how pious and Christian he might seem, could ever really be considered free of the inclination towards Judaism. One theologian and Inquisitor, the already-mentioned Escobar del Corro, argued that the inclination to religious sin—reversion to Judaism being included here—was contracted by the foetus at the time of conception. He even declared that it was not the act of sin which condemned the Judeo-Christian. The sinful act simply published the fact of the bad blood which flowed in his veins. Therefore, all who were of the same blood could justly be excluded by the pure blood statutes, even if they themselves had committed no religious crime.

IN THE later years of the reign of Philip II Spain groaned under the consequences of the pure blood statutes. We can get an idea of the kind of problems which the obsession with blood purity was inflicting on Spain from the demands that were pressed at the end of the 16th century and in the early years of the 17th begging for some measure of reform of the statutes.

Demanding some modification of the severity of the statutes, many persons noted that the number of those branded and excluded from the various communities of Spain because they were "impure Christians" had grown to include a very large section of the Spanish population. Among these pariahs were many notable for their wealth and power and for their noble ancestors who had held titles, had been esteemed as *grandees*, had worn military habits and had administered *encomiendas*.

Though nobody cast doubt on the Christian fidelity of such excellent personages, there were localities where Jewish blood had spread among them to such a degree that no one would risk an investigation of his ancestry. Such individuals would rather forego the dignities and honors to which they were otherwise entitled rather than risk the public dishonor of being labeled a Converso. Even those who were reasonably certain that there was no impurity in their ancestry fled from the pure blood investigations, fearful that a hitherto unknown stain might be discovered. For no one could be certain that among his sixteen great-great-grandparents some disqualifying blemish might not be brought to light.

The obsession with blood purity also endangered the peace of the realm, since it divided the nation into two camps constantly at odds with each other. In this civil strife the number and strength of the discontented was ever increasing, while the "pure blood" Christians became fewer and proportionately more arrogant. In foreign lands Spain suffered much loss of prestige, for as more and more of her citizens were discovered to be of Jewish origin, she came to be regarded as a land of *Marranos*. Even Erasmus, who enjoyed a vogue in Spain, is known to have expressed disdain for the country as a land of Jews.

Arguing against the unreasonable severity of the statutes, some declared that many of those esteemed as pure Christians enjoyed this reputation only due to ignorance, for, considering that the number of one's ancestors doubles with each generation and that twenty generations ago each individual had one million forebears, who could vouch for the Christianity of each of them? And if not all had been Christians, then at least some had to be Moors or Jews, since there had been no pagans in

Spain during the preceding eight centuries. Moreover, declared the opponents of the statutes, the ancestries in Spain were marked not only by Jewish and Moorish blood but also with the stain of apostasy. Many of the Christians encountered by the invading Moors were not so firm in their faith as to resist the benefits to be had from converting to the religion of the Moslem invader. The descendants of these converts were not penalized and there were no statutes or inquisitions to perpetuate their identity. The cape of oblivion covered all their traces and they are now esteemed as Old Christians.

But the mercy which time had shown the Christians with more remote ancestral blemishes was now denied to persons whose lineage was known to include some grandfather who might have faltered in his Christianity. Now the memory of each *macula* was kept alive with investigations which sought out and recorded it. This applied especially to the nobles whose lineage was exposed to public scrutiny precisely because it was so distinguished. Among the low-born the memory of an ancestor's infidelity hardly endured more than fifty years.

It was often noted in 16th and 17th century Spain that the excessive valuation placed on blood purity served the purposes neither of the king nor of God. Seeing that false pride of ancestry was preferred over clear evidence of Christian virtue, the king's vassals were discouraged from serving their sovereign. Indeed, those who would offer their services to the king incurred serious risks to their honor. Should they distinguish themselves in the royal service, the time would soon come when the king would seek to reward them with a military habit or some other token of distinction. But before taking possession of this honor they would have to

undergo an investigation into their ancestry and in this process they might be discovered to be of Jewish origin—and the very honor they had merited would have been the cause of their public disgrace. On the other hand, those who did pride themselves on their blood purity, soon came to feel that they already held title to all the honor they wanted and found no need for exerting themselves in the service of their king. As soldiers they were often useless and many a captain balked at having a proud pure-blooded noble in the ranks which he commanded.

THE RELIGIOUS consequences of the obsession with blood purity were no less harmful. It was pointed out that the perpetual infamy suffered by the Judeo-Christians jeopardized their fidelity to their new religion. Why should not some Conversos, their pitiful efforts to bury all memory of their past frustrated by the pure blood statutes, desperately turn to the religion of their ancestors for consolation? Likewise would not the statutes make the conversion of other non-believers difficult, for who would submit to baptism knowing that in his new religion he would be forever disdained as a pariah?

The protests against the excessive severity of the statutes also took note of the fact that the investigations were subject to the same frailties generally displayed by humans in their other endeavors. It was observed that whether or not an individual had personal enemies strongly influenced his reputation as a pure or impure Christian. The burden of having enemies made itself felt on those who enjoyed the best of reputations, since hearsay testimony was admitted. Conversely, one who had a notoriously defective ancestry might be able to demonstrate that he was pure of blood simply because he lacked enemies and had friends. In these cir-

cumstances, false witnesses abounded who would offer whatever perjuries were required of them, provided they were properly compensated.

The obsession with blood purity contributed its share to make 16th and 17th century Spain a world of uncertainty. Unlike the quality of nobility, which could be established relatively easily by consulting the proper documents, blood purity was a most fragile thing which depended for its verification upon common opinion and reputation. Once a handful of witnesses had testified against an individual, thousands of favorable opinions would not suffice to reestablish him as an Old Christian. Even when a person managed to pass the test and had taken possession of the honorable position to which it entitled him, powerful enemies might subsequently oppose his brother's candidacy for a similar honor with such vigor that not only would the second brother fail to realize his ambition, but the one already qualified would find himself labeled a Converso and would suffer the ignominy of being expelled from the post he occupied. Or an individual might provoke his own undoing if, after having once passed the test, he presented himself as a candidate for another position which demanded another investigation into his ancestry. Failing the second test, he would also find himself expelled from the first community that had received him, and the community itself would suffer the shame of having admitted one who was a Judeo-Christian! Thus, it was almost literally true, as one writer declared, that an individual might go to bed an Old Christian and awaken to find that he had been despoiled of this precious virtue.

THE fantastic lengths to which one had to go in order to retain one's status are indicated in a bit of cor-

respondence which has been preserved from the year 1636 between Don Fernand de Vera, the Bishop of Cuzco, and his nephew Don Jacinto de Vera. It appears that Don Jacinto was presenting himself as a candidate for admission to a military order. When the Bishop of Cuzco heard of his nephew's candidacy, he was disconcerted. The Bishop realized that on the results of the investigation depended the future of the whole Vera family. Accordingly he addressed to Don Jacinto a series of letters advising him how to cope with the problem which faced him.

The Bishop informed his kinsman that some difficulty might be encountered in the investigation of his maternal ancestors, even though the Bishop could demonstrate, if he were in Spain, that Don Jacinto's mother had been absolutely pure-blooded. To avoid possible difficulties, the Bishop counseled his nephew to claim as his mother a certain Mari Núñez who had raised him and had commonly been considered his mother. Mari Núñez, recently deceased, had certainly been of a noble and Old Christian family. But in Spain it was not sufficient to be a pure Christian, declared the Bishop of Cuzco. One must be able to *demonstrate* this quality without faltering. To this end, Don Jacinto must communicate with Francisco de Ervas, a cleric of La Zarza, who would be able to inform him about the places of origin of those whom he was going to claim as his maternal grandparents. But here too the Bishop urged caution. Full confidence must not be placed in Francisco de Ervas, who was judged to be of scant intelligence. Don Jacinto's cousin, the powerful Conde de la Roca, must visit the places named by Ervas and talk personally with the witnesses, disposing them to testify favorably. It would also be the task of the Count to make sure that the investigators would be led to

the door of the indoctrinated witnesses. He must see to it that even an ill-intentioned investigator could not avoid meeting those witnesses who were prepared to testify in Don Jacinto's favor. It might be necessary to bribe the investigators and for this purpose the Bishop of Cuzco sent his nephew a gold chain worth 4,000 *reales* and another 4,000 in coin, a sum which he later increased considerably.

In all things Don Jacinto was to place full confidence in Count de la Roca, who was the head of the family and who, as one of the most experienced *caballeros* in the service of the king, knew how to "season" things of this sort. Only in the matter of the distribution of gratuities must Don Jacinto deal cautiously with the Count since the latter was capable of keeping the money for himself, a weakness which the Bishop qualified as a "natural one" and for which rather than condemn the Count he was to be commended to God for remedy while his kinsmen dissimulated and deplored in private the vice which marred the perfection of this man.

Continuing on this theme, the Bishop warned that if the money he sent was not used carefully, irreparable harm might be done. The military habit sought by his nephew might be held up indefinitely or might finally be granted with some dispensation, an intolerable compromise for so distinguished a nobleman. Knowing how to negotiate wisely was of the utmost importance, declared the Bishop, for this ability alone had enabled even unworthy individuals to reach their goal. There were even those who, having presented whatever data on their ancestry suited their purpose, managed things so well that the investigation was carried no further than Madrid, rather than being pursued into the provinces where their forefathers were born.

Mindful that of Troy and of Alexander the Great no trace remained other than that which could be found in books, the Bishop of Cuzco encouraged his nephew to be a friend of those who compiled genealogies, so that they would take note of Don Jacinto and of his cousin Count la Roca. But in this he must be prudent lest he be deemed vain and ambitious. Furthermore, if a qualified translator could be found, the Bishop would pay the expense of translating into Latin a recent book on the most ancient origins of the Vera family, written by Francisco de la Puente. (This and other similar works were pure fabrications written to order for the Bishop.) The translation should be printed and allowed to circulate in Europe where it would be seen that the Veras of Spain descended from the Veros of Rome and that they were thus related to the Veros and Veres of England and Ireland, likewise descended from the Roman Veros. At the proper place in the translation, immediately following mention of himself, the Bishop of Cuzco suggested an appropriate entry concerning Don Jacinto de Vera, which should begin, "Don Jacinto de Vera, nephew of Don Fernando de Vera, known because of his valor as Iron Head, who served in such-and-such campaigns, etc. etc."

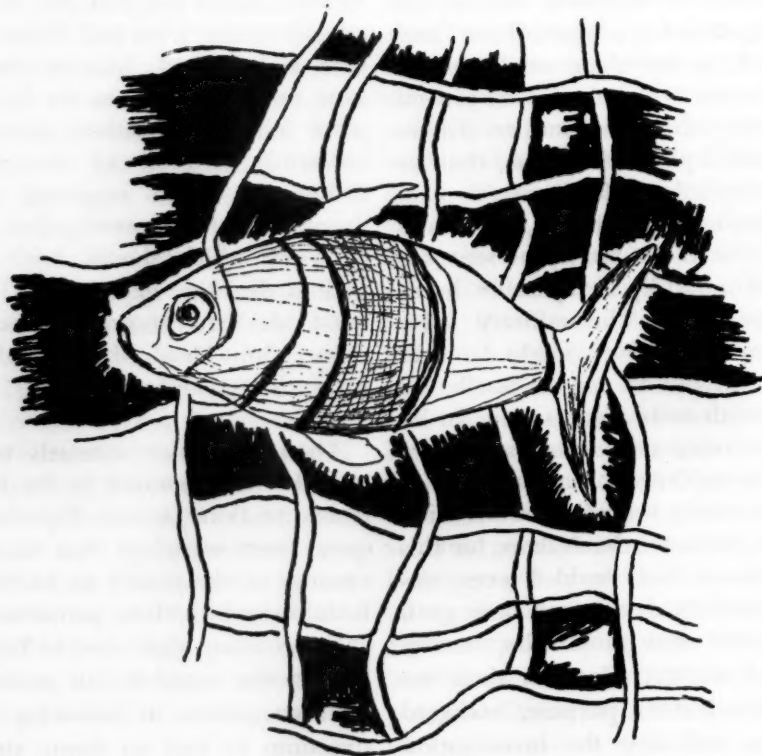
These and other counsels were repeated and elaborated in the Bishop's letters to Don Jacinto. Especially frequent were warnings that there were enemies of the family in Mérida and Badajoz against whose pernicious influence a constant vigil must be kept. Don Jacinto was urged by his uncle to be most scrupulous in following the instructions he had set down, since the Bishop would rather see him without a military habit than carelessly risking his honor and reputation in the attempt to qualify for one.

THE FOREGOING is a specific example of what the pure blood statutes meant to an individual living in 16th and 17th century Spain. The obsession with blood purity also had far-reaching consequences in matters which far transcended the fortunes of individual Spaniards.

The pure blood statutes perpetuated the presence of the Jew as a figure on the Spanish scene centuries after the 1492 expulsion. In thus permitting herself to be haunted by the ghost of Judaism in the 16th and 17th centuries,

Spain created one of the most important causes of her own disintegration. We have indicated some of the consequences of her preoccupation with blood purity. We can perhaps even now grasp the import of these consequences from the desperate appeal of the Jeronimite, Fray Gerónimo de la Cruz, who in 1637 cried out to Philip IV of Spain:

"Oh cast out from Spain the name Jew, for today the name alone brings more harm than formerly was done by the individuals themselves."



Looking at a Map

By DANNIE ABSE

The map does not show the rain:
only pale blue for sea and Great Britain
a mosaic of multi-coloured counties
where the English weather never changes
and the local hills and mountain ranges
are shaded heavily—though never white
as moods of snow may shade them.

Clouds never shamble over
unless this cigarette-smoke I blow out
be cloud; this sad electric bulb be sun
where constellations of flies (not planets)
all silently swing about.

False! False! Boring lines squiggle
meaning empty roads, hedges and wet tyres
or desolation of damp railway lines
where no-one encounters a red lamp danger.

But there's menace of a kind.
Why else do official cartographers
condemn the whole land behind
a strict cage emptied of noughts and crosses
where no happy latitude is given?

And this, too, another lie:
this measurement of a lifetime's journey
in inches, these little exact circles
for names of places where untamed people
privately hide and love and cry.

Enough, I switch off the electric bulb,
the thin current of the sun.
Oh nightly, something secret breathes and moves:
the whole flat civilised map
that here is cracked into coloured counties,
like energy explodes, goes black;
these names of cities break out
into dotty, shifting points of glitterings
and the light blue tide flows back.

books and authors

The Unredeemed: Post-war German Writing

By THEODORE FRANKEL

DAS GEDULDIGE FLEISCH, BY WILLI HEINRICH. Deutsche Verlagsanstalt. Stuttgart. 1955. 630 pp.

DIE GALEERE, BY BRUNO E. WERNER. Berman Fischer Verlag. Frankfurt am Main. 1949. 552 pp.

IM SPERRKREIS, BY FELIX HARTLAUB. Rowohlt Verlag. Hamburg. 1955. 176 pp.

WHAT was it really like to be an average German in Hitler's Germany, neither official nor S.S. man, but a run-of-the-mill *Volksgenosse*? Were they able to talk, the dead might give us an answer; the living are too entangled in their past involvement and their present rehabilitation to see objectively what happened; at best their memoirs and reconstructions are first approximations to the truth, omitting as much as they reveal.

Two of the three books here reviewed are recent novels by living authors, the third is the diary of a man who did not survive the war. The two novels have not been chosen for their intrinsic value—hardly any significant novels are being written in Germany these days—but as fair specimens of their genre; the diary of the dead man, written without the need for alibying, can serve us as a yardstick with which to measure the other two.

Willi Heinrich's *Das geduldige Fleisch* (published in this country under the title *The Iron Cross*) is typical of dozens of war books that have appeared in Germany since 1945. It describes the fighting against the Russians (it is amazing how very few German books show the war on the Western front) and its protagonist is a *Landser*,

a simple German G.I.; in this book he is called Corporal Steiner. The plot is the usual tale of front warfare, and the most exciting episodes are Steiner's leading his platoon, cut off behind the Russian lines, back to the German main force and, subsequently, a suicidal attack on a Russian strong point, in the course of which Steiner kills his superior officer, a coward and a weakling. Like most other German war books *Das geduldige Fleisch* is not really a novel working up to a climax of increased meaning, but a string of disconnected episodes, each having the same static value; and the story concludes when the hero dies at the end quite by accident.

This episodic, quasi-epic style of plot and narration with its lack of climax and its substitution of the rise and ebb of each episode's tension for the developing dynamic of a genuine novel is deliberate on the part of the author, because what he aims for is not a novel, creating or recreating a complex human situation, but a modern saga intended to be larger and simpler than life.

The largest and the simplest of the book's figures is Corporal Steiner, the hero of the tale, and what really makes him significant is not any of his positive virtues, but his total severance from the civilian world; a personal isolation fraught with great meaning for the purposes of the book. Unlikely and absurd as it may sound to us, it seems to be of utmost importance to the author to create a soldier who has absolutely no contact with the civilian world, a soldier who, for all we know about him, for all he knows about himself,

did not exist prior to his induction into the army, a man who receives no mail, apparently has no family to worry about and does not want to go home when he gets a furlough.

Significantly, the only substantial piece of information we get concerning Corporal Steiner's background is negative in character: he did not belong to any of the privileged groups but came from humble surroundings. Positively stated, he is a man of the people, an ur-German in uniform, and this characterization is not merely the key to the man, but, as in sagas generally, it *is* the man. The qualities proverbially attributed to the common man, loyalty, stoicism, good humor, practical ingenuity, contempt for verbal cleverness, politics and highfalutin ideals, the possession of a profound if inarticulate philosophy of life—Steiner is all these, neither more nor less; except that in his case everything comes in more than life size.

THE intention behind all this stylization of character and plot is not to give a reasonably accurate account of the German soldier as he actually was, but to project an idealized image, a myth corresponding to and dictated by the emotional needs of today's German reader. If *Das geduldige Fleisch*—and, I might add, most other German war books—is anxious to establish the palpably false proposition that the German soldier as a category was completely disassociated from civilian life, i.e. from Hitler and Nazism, and that the soldiers and not the civilians were the *real* Germans, it is because today's German reader is only too eager to draw the implicit conclusion that the *real* Germans were innocent.

This soldierly innocence extends in the case of Willi Heinrich's book not merely to the situation within the Reich, but is made to cover events that happened under the very noses of the *Wehrmacht*. Was it possible for any German soldier to fight for years in Poland and Russia and never to come across evidence of pillage and looting, of the wholesale slaughter of hostages and partisans, the existence of concentration camps? Walter Dirks, the editor

of the *Frankfurter Hefte*, has written only recently: "My brother who died on the side of the road during the retreat from the Caucasus knew what was happening in Buchenwald and Dachau. Of course, he was only a *Landser*, a lowly soldier, and possibly for that reason he had a better chance to learn what went on."

The fictional *Landser*s in *Das geduldige Fleisch*, on the other hand, have never heard of these abominations, much less participated in them; in fact, they are such noble characters that when one of them rapes a Russian woman prisoner—though not without extreme provocation on her part, to be sure—he is left behind by his unit to suffer a fate worse than death.

It should be noted here parenthetically that the military dogma which holds that a soldier is not morally responsible for acts committed under orders is particularly strong in Germany where it goes back at least to the medieval *Landsknecht*, the mercenary, who, because he killed for money, was somehow a moral neuter, an instrument without a will of his own and therefore without responsibility. A good part of the image of the medieval *Landsknecht* has been incorporated into the myth of the contemporary *Landser* and goes far to explain Corporal Steiner's lowly origin, his professionalism, his lack of hatred for the enemy, his indifference to politics, the conception of death as an accident. However, precisely because Hitler's soldiers were in fact not homeless mercenaries, but today's German's brother or son, or his younger self, and because these men witnessed and committed horrors exceeding any dreamed up by a medieval mercenary, they cannot be exculpated by the doctrine of military obedience. What they truly were and did has become unmentionable in Germany today and their place has been taken by the facile fiction, the glib myth.

BY CONTRAST, the picture that is painted of the German civilian is, if not more lifelike, at least more complex. A better than average example of the "home front" novel is Bruno Werner's *Die Galeere*, which tells the tale of Georg Forster, jour-

nalist and art critic. When the story begins in 1933, Forster is a promising young man of letters, a charming young blade who lives the good life surrounded by a tightly knit circle of witty and amiable friends. His political sympathies are on the right and he grudgingly supports the Nazis, though he abominates their brutalities and their racial theories, because he feels that Hitler is the only man who can lead Germany out of the mess of the Weimar Republic. Forster is also naive enough to believe that intellectuals like himself can reform the Nazi administration by working with them. As the story ends in 1945 Forster is a defeated and aged man, most of his friends are dead—some killed by the Nazis, others in the war and still others by their own hands. He has lost everything: wife and child are dead, house and possessions in ruins and he himself a fugitive from the Gestapo.

Again, what counts are not the details of the plot but the image the author wishes to project of the "average" German. And the image is clearly that of an isolated helpless individual caught up in the machinery of the state, duped, manipulated and terrorized into compliance and complicity. Society as it was before Hitler, with its myriad ties of friendship and family, with its group loyalties of party, club and business, is shown first weakened and then destroyed by the totalitarian system till at last no social intercourse can take place except within the framework of the state. Forster's own life is seen as just one of the morbid case histories that in the aggregate make up the social pathology of the totalitarian state: little by little his friends are sent to the front, his wife evacuated, his business associates forcibly transferred to other positions, so that in the end he deals only with faceless official instances, lives with strangers and sleeps in public air raid shelters. When he decides, late and timidly, to oppose the Nazis, every group he tries to contact dissolves under the threat of the Gestapo and the exigencies of the war situation; he finds, as it were, no social room to maneuver in. His one act of defiance is of such an intensely private nature that it turns into merely

another symbol of the hopelessness of public protest: he falls in love with and marries a quarter-Jewess. (This, incidentally, is a stock situation in recent German books—and it is always a Jewish woman, never a man, for whose sake the taboo is violated.) Other than that he finds no way to translate his opposition into any kind of meaningful activity. Seen in this light, the entire question of personal responsibility is, as far as the average German is concerned, made to seem beside the point. And it is this impotence of the individual will—and not so much its impotence as its irrelevance—that becomes the symbol and the symptom of the whole rotten society and establishes the atmosphere of the sickness and sterility of a doomed community calculated to arouse the reader's compassion and pity.

Curiously enough, it is only when the narration arrives at the disintegration and defeat of the Nazi system that life returns to the book. A new spirit seems to breathe through the pages, the language takes on new vigor and the author's imagination, till then languishing, rises almost joyfully to the awful spectacle of defeat. The descriptions of German cities burning under Allied air attacks turn into veritable celebrations of death and destruction, an unrelieved black mass of burning flesh and rotting cadavers, an interminable sequence of blazing flames and smoking ruins, of moaning and weeping. At the same time a more hopeful note is introduced with individual Germans helping each other in distress, with a whole streetful of people trying to dig an unknown woman out of a caved-in house.

THERE are two reasons, I believe, for this harping on the spectacle of defeat and for the exalted tone adopted in describing it. One is the intention to show that defeat brought back the possibility of salvation, that the Germans freed from the system which had rendered them helpless could again find within themselves the resources of neighborly love, of personal will, of individual responsibility.

The other, the more important motivation for this protracted necrophilia is that

it serves as a kind of suggested alibi. By contrasting the average German's crime—in this case Forster's crime of silent and impotent toleration of the Nazi system—with the punishment—the loss of family, possessions, profession—the author draws a parable which each German applies to himself. This kind of parable has become fixed and obsessive in Germany. By now it has been so well rehearsed that authors can omit large and essential parts of it, confident that their public will supply the missing portions. For example, a recent book by the young author Gert Ledig tells of the effect of an Allied air raid on a German town. The book is little more than a detailed catalog of people burned and buried alive, of twisted limbs, broken necks, etc. The name of the book is simply, *Retribution*. Retribution for what? The book does not say, it need not say, for German author and German reader tacitly agree that nothing they could have done could ever have deserved such terrible punishment.

This, too, is a typical attitude and, in its own way, as hardened in its pattern as the soldier myth, except that it has not quite attained the heroic proportions and the extreme stylization of a myth. It is rather a dramatic role into which the civilian of Hitler's day casts himself retrospectively: the role of the hopeless bystander who was in the end punished for somebody else's crimes. It is in keeping with this almost universal German attitude that in the entire post-war German literature—I am speaking here of novels only—there is not to be found a single balanced portrayal of an S.S. or S.A. man; and this in spite of the fact that millions of Germans belonged for years to these party organizations, and their lives and the lives of all Germans were molded by the Nazi apparatus. When an occasional Nazi does appear in a German book these days, he is only a peripheral figure, a part of the landscape, as it were, one of the inevitabilities of nature to be accepted and adjusted to, a messenger of a power system located in another dimension.

IN STARK contrast to the unreal fiction produced by living authors stands the

stark factual reality of Felix Hartlaub's posthumous work *Im Sperrkreis*. The book is not a novel but the fragmentary diary, not originally intended for publication, of an enormously talented young author and historian whose final assignment on the staff of the German army's historical section took him into Hitler's last headquarters in Berlin.

This is one of the strangest diaries ever written. In form it is little more than a sequence of short bursts of impressionistic prose descriptions of people and places, haphazardly strung together and scrupulously "objective" in their restraint from value judgment.

Here are three excerpts. Of a six-year-old boy Hartlaub writes, "His eyes look as if they just opened for the first time, softly; almost perfect circles, with tender and irregular lids, of an insufferably watery blue, without vision, without depth, without bottom, stagnant water, pure and lifeless, only at the corner a trace of fright."

Of trees: "The great bodies of the poplar trees. The leaves are illuminated from within—almost like ripe fruit. . . . Their murmuring seems to grow louder. There is the many-voiced hasty cross-conversation of the outer leaves, an endless blind excitement; but the interior of the treebody has its own voice, too, though without individual tongues: an irregular breathing and sighing at the border of song. And then, at times, a single limb is touched by an exceptional excitement, it tries to drown out all the others, an inconceivable whispered plaint or a laughter in which a heavy melody is stirred up and something metallic rattles."

Of German officers assigned to headquarters far removed from the front, seen in their club at night: "They sit stiffly in their giant armchairs, almost like mummies, only their hands move from time to time over the table where the rest of the golden brown liquor sparkles. The heads are quite dark in the moving clouds of smoke. Curious, what happens to heads, here. The face spreads like something that has spilled, too much food produces an additional face that no longer quite belongs to its owner. Especially the eyes look in

some cases queer and uncomfortable, they don't trust all that fat. The skulls change; here a small piece is planed off and there an indentation is evened out where till now a small trace of personal aloofness had still been stagnating. It is a slow but unremitting process of deformation or, if you will, a reminting. . . . Anyhow, one could no longer simply show the photos of these gentlemen in the commercial photographers' windows along the Kurfuerstendam . . . where once they made such a good impression, casting a firm and benign glance over their gold-rimmed eye glasses, that glance which understood the new time so well, though it did not quite approve all the accompanying circumstances. . . ."

I have quoted from Hartlaub at some length because I wanted to show how much more accurately such surrealistic prose grasps the true quality of peoples' inner world during the Hitler period; in fact, a good case could be made that authors like Heinrich and Werner distort the irrational quality of this world by squeezing it into the framework of a "realistic" novel, or a pseudo-saga, with its assumptions of order and rationality. The very syntax of these books with its pretension of ordering events into causal sequences becomes an instrument of falsification.

Another important aspect of Hartlaub's prose is his way of abolishing perspective by placing the reader so close to the observed object that it fills his whole vision; a good example is the close-up of the little boy's eyes which, being monstrously enlarged, no longer belong to this boy but lead an independent existence, and belong to the observer as much as to anyone else.

The effect of this extreme physical proximity of observer to observed, is, paradoxically, a total lack of intellectual involvement and judgment. For in order to judge one needs, above all, distance—yet distance and perspective do not exist in Hartlaub's world.

THIS absence of intellectual involvement, this inhibition from judgment is, in turn, the symptom of a far deeper emotional detachment. The very choice of Hartlaub's topics is significant in its compulsive

avoidance of anything in his public or private life that might claim or commit him, in his rigid concentration on things, or those aspects in people that show their reification.

Here is a diary that hardly ever mentions the word "I," that contains no more than four or five personal episodes, and even then the author refers to himself as "He." There is as little mention of politics as there is of family. Astonishingly for a German, the words "honor" and "fatherland" do not appear, nor do "conscience" or "guilt." There isn't even any relieving gossip, just that interminable sequence of impersonal snapshots, of X-ray pictures taken by a marvellously accurate, but mechanical, camera eye. Nothing has remained of the man but that inhuman camera eye. Here is a man who in the privacy of his secret diary has no need of privacy.

And it is precisely this total annihilation of personality that makes the Hartlaub of the diary the representative of the "average" German, that makes the pure *Dichter* the "ideal" authoritarian personality purged of such individuality as may still cling to the actual run-of-the-mill German of Hitler's time as a reminder of his previous life. If Hartlaub takes no cognizance of concentration camps, if he can no longer judge the horror because he is too close to it, he nevertheless cannot help reflecting man's inhumanity: by portraying him as a thing, by examining his surface so closely that no inner man is left. The deterioration of humanity is seen as the decay of matter.

Yet it must be remembered that the individual isolation and impotence and terror did not tell the whole story. There were also positive forces within the individual Germans that made them identify themselves with the State: there was that psychological attraction which, affecting all Germans with but few exceptions, served as a centripetal force keeping each individual in his proper place and revolving around the center, the apparatus of the state. Professor Michael Polanyi, in a striking phrase, has spoken of "the moral force of immorality," the enthusiasm with which many Germans, especially among

the youth, committed evil because they saw it as a moral duty, as necessary for Germany's fulfillment of her "historic destiny," irrespective of other moral obligations.

This was important, to be sure, and it can be found in Hartlaub's diary; but more important was the naked dynamism of the Nazi system, the hypnotic power of the organization over each of its constituent particles. Here is Hartlaub, no Nazi, and a brilliant, sensitive human being, registering the gravitational pull exerted by the system on the atom that is himself. First the qualification: "I don't deny the cruelty; for people like me it is ghastly, that is understood." But he would not dream of stopping his work at Hitler's headquarters: "People have not the faintest idea how one no longer really belongs to himself. Once the dynamic of this place has caught hold of one!" And he continues, "One noticed it already during the few days of furlough: without the military reports, the maps, the heaped desk one simply could not really live. Perhaps there could be a kind of mission in this, a pitiless, destroying mission. One's own life was anyhow dried up, one's own projects and works—all over and done with; he [sic] was only a writing finger, a reading eye, an optic nerve, therefore possibly the frequent enervating headaches, the insomnia, but the eye was always clear, open for those letters, often crooked and screechy, which 'that man cuts into the metal of history.'"

THIS dynamic holds Hartlaub even in defeat, when he recognizes that the center around which he revolves does not really exist: "The center—and hardly anybody knows this—is a vacuum charged with highly concentrated air, or else this

air is unusually thin and fine." Still, he does not leave, for he has nowhere else to go, least of all into himself.

I have devoted so much space to Hartlaub not only because he has truthfully exposed the fantasy quality of much of contemporary German literature, but also because his book goes far toward explaining one of the most irritating German character traits: the habitual claim of innocence. Hartlaub shows from the inside what most of us on the outside have long suspected: that when the Germans excuse themselves on the ground that they have been terrorized, they do not tell the full truth. We on our part must recognize that the compulsion under which they found themselves was real: they existed within a power system from which there was no escape, either physically or spiritually. To that extent their protestations of individual helplessness carry a measure of conviction.

Yet when we have understood this much and granted the Germans their claim, we must go one step further and say that if man's will and his human dignity are to have any meaning, such broad explanations can never justify the acts of the individual. There is a point past all social causation, beyond communal terror and enthusiasm, where the individual must confront himself with what he has done or failed to do. It is at this point that the Germans have failed and continue to fail.

Here at last is the mass man seen from within, cut off from all social ties and therefore severed from his own humanity, a man incapable of individual action or moral judgment who had so thoroughly learned the lesson of his social impotence that even in the secrecy of his inmost self he has castrated all manifestations of personal will.

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History Without Homily

By MOSES HADAS

GREAT AGES AND IDEAS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. By SALO W. BARON, GERSON D. COHEN, ABRAHAM S. HALKIN, YEHEZKEL KAUFMANN, RALPH MARCUS, CECIL ROTH, Edited, with an Introduction by LEO W. SCHWARZ. Random House (A Publication of Hadassah). 515 pp. \$5.00.

HAPPILY the solid substance of this book allays misgivings aroused by its title and flamboyant dust-jacket squib ("A brilliant, searching interpretation. . ."). The book is a thoroughly adult and competent sequence of popular monographs, free of unction or hand-wringing or the alternation of cringing and self-glorification endemic in Jewish apologetics. The panel of experts called upon to share their knowledge and insights have done so with complete candor and with complete respect for the critical intelligence of their readers. They have sought neither to shelter them from difficulties nor to lead them by the hand along any prescribed path. This is not an easy thing for devoted experts to do even where their subject is purely intellectual; where passionately cherished convictions are involved, the avoidance of the homiletic tone is truly remarkable. Matters of religion are dealt with as objectively, on the whole, as are other aspects of culture. If the reader seeks for a basis or at least a justification for the faith he presumably shares with the authors, he will find it not in formal exposition nor in exhortation but only by example, which is after all the only effective mode of communicating faith. The mere fact that men who know all the questions are nevertheless undisturbed in their commitment may in itself constitute a weighty argument.

For the perplexed questioner who wants and needs to know the past experience of his people as a help to understanding, finding his place in, and confronting the contemporary situation, such a book as this is more useful

than either a continuous chronicle or a series of philosophical analyses. The epochs chosen for treatment are not only of major interest in themselves but of decisive importance in shaping and giving direction to the totality of Jewish experience. Not only is intellectual curiosity satisfied—a sufficient motivation for reading any history—but there is the more practical and indeed urgent motivation of determining conduct and attitudes and gauging the prospects for the future. For the utilitarian as contrasted with the detached scientific objective it would be better for the reader to start with the concluding section and work backward from the more to the less familiar. Not only is the contemporary scene part of the reader's own experience, but it is so varied, complicated, fluid and pregnant as to be most in need of all the illumination judicious and scholarly treatment can provide.

It is fortunate that the most immediately useful section of the book ("The Modern Age," pp. 315-484) is of such superb quality. Only Professor Baron's unparalleled combination of encyclopedic erudition, a judicious eye for the significant, practical knowledge of politics and society, and dispassionate temper could produce a picture of the modern Jewish scene that is at once so complete and succinct. Because of its contemporaneity Baron's essay necessarily deals with many questions on which feelings run high, yet it is hard to think that any partisan could take exception to his even-handed appraisals. The closest approach to pamphleteering this reader recalls is a protest against the high cost of funerals under free enterprise—and even this protest is a completely apposite illustration of the importance of communal organization. Professor Baron is very far from being a Pollyanna, and yet *because* it is so restrained the reader is apt to find his contribution the most optimistic as well as the most closely reasoned statement of Jewish prospects. It, if nothing else in the volume, should be made required reading.

DR. CECIL ROTH's "The European Age" (pp. 267-311) is something of a disappointment, at least in the company it here keeps. It fails to present so comprehensive a view or so meaningful an analysis as do the other contributions, but is mainly occupied with a faintly objectionable portrait of our quaint but withal golden-hearted ancestors who washed more frequently than their neighbors and learned to read. What we have, in effect, is a somewhat patronizing tour through a section of an ethnographic museum, with a characteristic moral at the end (p. 271):

"What fundamental lesson does our experience hold for posterity? I have spent much time pondering the problem since I was invited to collaborate in this book, and I have come to a firm conclusion. It is that they continued to exist, above all that they continued to exist as *Jews*. . . . No other group in history has ever withstood such constant unrelenting pressure, century after century. But the Jews experienced it, defied it, survived it, and emerged at the end unbroken and unbowed, to achieve in our own day their greatest and most unbelievable triumph."

The spectacle is admirable, but only a romantic can find it a compelling incentive to conduct.

Where Dr. Roth vouchsafes us a glimpse through his own romantically tinted lens, Dr. Halkin exhibits a full panorama of "The Judeo-Islamic Age" (pp. 215-263) through the broad and clean glass of mature and objective scholarship. His period has special interest for contemporaries because it is both unfamiliar and rich and because it is the only period before our own when Jews participated so fully in the general cultural environment and gave themselves so fully to secular as well as religious interests. Even the opposition to Maimonides, Dr. Halkin makes it clear, was based on philosophic, not obscurantist, grounds, and the defection of the Karaites was motivated as much by social and economic grievances as by

religious conviction. The efflorescence of the Islamic period gave way to a recrudescence of medievalism: are we to conceive this as a cyclical pattern and expect a new age of faith? Dr. Halkin is not afraid to show why earlier phases cannot now be recapitulated (p. 261):

"Relativism has come to pervade every branch of intellectual inquiry. Absolutes only raise a smile. What is profoundly important is that this change has robbed us of the earnestness that was so marked a characteristic of our ancestors. We are no longer committed to the truth of Judaism as they were committed to it. . . . With us that commitment and conviction have been replaced by a sentimental attachment to the "legacy" of Judaism, or by a belief in the social benefits of religion, or by a need for the peace of mind it bestows. Since our religious convictions are vague and accommodating, they are compatible with almost any other belief we may happen to hold. If we are concerned with harmonization at all, it is only in the sense of finding room for a cherished but somewhat antiquated bequest."

DR. COHEN's task in his "The Talmudic Age" (pp. 143-212) is nothing less than setting forth the structure of normative Judaism as it was defined, given authority, and transmitted by the rabbis. He is refreshingly aware that the talmudic stage of Judaism (as differentiated from the biblical) amounted to "a metamorphosis so thorough and so pervasive as to cast its character in a mold that remains practically unchanged to modern times" (p. 143). If normative Judaism as we know it is a creation of the talmudic age, then its justification by an uninterrupted chain of tradition from Moses onward is a pious fiction. It is striking, as Dr. Cohen remarks (p. 191), "that a culture so theocratically oriented as the Talmudic should have so relatively little to say of its God, and virtually nothing of a dogmatic nature beyond what is explicit in

Scripture." To demand a theology of a nonsystematic religion is anachronistic; "recent anthropological and psychological studies have demonstrated that ancient autochthonous religions were originally a body of rituals and sacred symbols around which the theory (myth or theology) grew later out of a need for rationalization" (p. 201). What the rabbis did was to prescribe a detailed regimen of daily life to the end of cementing and delimiting a community, and their great achievement was the creation of a "commonwealth within an Empire." It is the persistence of this "commonwealth" that has assured the continued existence of the Jewish people. Frequently the unity has been imposed from without; the great danger to survival is dissolution of the sense of community and consequent atomization.

"The Hellenistic Age" (pp. 95-139), treated by Ralph Marcus (whose premature death last December was a grievous loss to scholarship), has had little influence in the main stream of Judaism because it *was* a fragment, purposely excluded when normative Judaism was crystallized. Christianity, which became its residuary legatee, gained much from it—the pattern of conversion, forms of liturgy, the doctrine of the Logos, the monastic ideal; for Jews its principal value is as a classic paradigm for the confrontation and modes of fusion of Judaism and what may be called European humanism.

WHATEVER other values the Jewish "commonwealth" may have preserved and propagated, surely its central identification is as the guardian of a religious heritage. The later papers deal with adaptations of the heritage, Professor Kaufmann's ("The Biblical Age," pp. 3-92) with its genesis and character. Here the conventionally trained scholar is confronted, as he doubtless should be, by a mystery which transcends human logic. The logical alternatives are a species of fundamentalism with its simple doctrine of direct verbal inspira-

tion, or the critical position, in which the notion of inspiration is inevitably blurred. That Professor Kaufmann is a conservative critic (e.g., Ruth was not written to combat post-exilic separatism but belongs to the period of the monarchy) is not to the point; he does accept criticism in that he recognizes foreign influences and a process of development. But though he nowhere verbalizes the concept, it is clear that he accepts Scripture as divinely inspired. He does not find it necessary to ridicule polytheism (as apologists of the Graetz school feel constrained to do), but shows that the essential superiority of Jewish monotheism is in the conception of the absolute sovereignty of God, who is not subordinate to fate or amenable to magic. To argue that Kaufmann overstates the case for the uniqueness and purity and consistency and continuing relevance of biblical theology is worse than merely futile. A faith which does not require the insulation of ignorance is a mystery which is not susceptible to argument. It is the final mystery of religion.

And the entire career of Israel as set forth in this book is in the end a mystery. It would have been easy enough to schematize its matter, merely by calculated distribution of emphasis, to produce a clearly defined and clearly directed spiritual motivation, but that would have been falsification. If the truth as here presented is incapable of converting a determined rationalist by the force of its human logic, yet in its totality it too comprises a mystery capable of enlisting full devotion.

Nehru and His India

By LIONEL GELBER

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, By FRANK MORAES. Macmillan. 1956. 511 pp. \$6.75.

INDIA has been depicted by its Prime Minister as a nation suffering from a split personality. But are there not signs of the same defect in Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru's

own statesmanship? India is the chief power of free Asia and, as these lines are written, Mr. Nehru has voiced wrath over measures taken against Egypt by Israel, Britain and France; towards evil wrought by Soviet Russia in Hungary he seemed more reluctant to make a stand—though finally, of course, did so. Not that a differential morality has been rare either among chancelleries or, as over the Middle East, in the collective behavior of the United Nations. But for any such lapses on the home front, Mr. Nehru himself has been the first to upbraid his own people. From what do these inconsistencies spring?

So indissolubly has Nehru's career been connected with the emergence of India that Mr. Frank Moraes, quite properly, has made a single narrative from his double theme. Nowadays, too, and not only in India, we must reckon with an interaction between domestic and foreign affairs which is unremitting. About the home front, Mr. Moraes—at once *engagé* and detached—never lets his emotions get the better of him; there Nehru's shortcomings are probed with discernment. But when he deals with Nehru's role on the world scene, Mr. Moraes himself does not follow through. For this biography implies that while Nehru may be fallible at home, he is, on a wider stage, just about infallible. Only in Nehru's treatment of the Kashmir issue is serious error admitted. It is not, however, the monotones of omniscience but the nuances of human imperfection which bring this portrait to life.

Yet here also we are in debt to Mr. Moraes. The light he sheds on Nehru's growth and temperament, outlook and character will, if studied with care, illuminate the entire range of policy.

"In the contradictions of his nature," writes Mr. Moraes, "his simplicity and charm, the wilfulness of his spirit, his brooding aloofness, the pride, the temper, the tantrums, the faith and doubts, in his seeming arrogance but innate humility, his lack of religiosity but high moral fervor, and in his determination coupled with a curious diffidence Jawaharlal does represent the new and modern India of our day."

Time after time Nehru complained to Gandhi that he was unpredictable. But now apparently there is nobody who dares speak to the disciple as the disciple once spoke to the master. Traits, moreover, which Nehru himself displays—rational or irrational in their permutations and combinations—will surely not leave their mark on the domestic scene yet cease to operate when India looks abroad.

A NOTABLE feature of this impressive work by the distinguished editor of *The Times of India* are the vignettes of many who figured in the struggle for Indian freedom. Fascinating is the account of Motilal Nehru's relationship with his son, and of Gandhi with them both. The elder Nehru at an early juncture, Vallabhbhai Patel at a later one, demonstrated robust qualities by which more volatile associates were sustained. Gandhi, however, was the prophet who stirred the masses; Jawaharlal Nehru, attracting the middle class, became the architect of independence and India's great modernizing force. The points of contact between these two, the grounds for divergence, are admirably delineated.

Under the category of external affairs one topic is put in a fresh perspective—the change in Mr. Nehru's attitude towards Britain. Jawaharlal, like Motilal Nehru before him, resisted British rule but was enamored of the British people. If that had not been so, India might never have remained as a Commonwealth Republic within a larger historic entity. And if, after the current Suez cleavage, there is no final breach, it will be fair to attribute her continued membership to Mr. Nehru's own predilections, to those of his coadjutor, Mr. Krishna Menon, plus affirmative promptings from Ottawa.

On other aspects of foreign policy, nevertheless, the most resounding of aspirations cannot bridge the gap between word and deed. Within the confines of India, Mr. Nehru does not hesitate to tell his own compatriots the truth about themselves; Mr. Moraes shows how Nehru did his utmost to stop the colossal excesses that stained the partition between India and

Pakistan. Yet nothing in the record deters Mr. Nehru from presenting India as a mentor to other peoples. Apart from his irascibility at Bandung, the United Nations phase of the Kashmir story is the one fall from grace in the conduct of Indian foreign policy which even Mr. Moraes will concede. But what has made this incongruous is that while forbidding the United Nations to intervene in his own disputes, Nehru still insists that it intervene elsewhere—wherever, that is, Moscow and Peking will not object or where no awkward precedents, relevant to the case of Kashmir, will be established. So also when a resurgent Islam treads on India's own corns he deems it unbearable. At greater distance, Islam is one of his chosen instruments in the drive toward a world of reason and brotherhood, justice and peace.

Race consciousness may be the clue to an ambivalence which is more pronounced in foreign than domestic affairs. India protests when Asian neighbors encroach on her own frontiers—Pakistan now armed by the United States, Communist China pressing down ominously on Tibet and Nepal. Yet at Bandung, where Chou En-lai was the more adroit, in leadership of the Afro-Asian bloc at the United Nations, in the fanfare over the Five Principles of co-existence with Communist China, in the passionate espousal of Egypt's cause, there is a crusading, Pan-Asian note which strikes deeper than others.

"Quite frankly," Mr. Moraes explains, "the concept of Soviet imperialism or colonialism makes little impact on the Asian mind, which has always equated colonialism with color." But to what extent can it be so equated any longer? Nehru would not be where he is if the Western brand of imperialism had not receded. Human rights are universal in validity, freedom is indivisible. A selective Pan-Asian approach to these may in itself be a form of the very racism against which Indians have otherwise rebelled.

NEHRU has always known that an Indian social democracy might be subverted by domestic Communism. It imperils itself no less by a revulsion from the

West which could play into the hands of the East. Singapore is mentioned by Mr. Moraes as an example of the kind of British imperialism the average Asian deplors. But would India be safer if that Malayan base, relinquished to a local pro-Soviet majority of overseas Chinese, were to become an outpost of Peking—another link in a Sino-Soviet chain of encirclement?

Nehru, we are reminded by his biographer, dislikes it when his policies are dubbed neutralist or isolationist. But if India pursues a path similar to that which the United States pursued during her own early days, the same descriptive terms are applicable. For an isolationist America was not cut off from international activities; as far, however, as a free world order had to be defended, she left the onus to others. And now India may be economically so weak and strategically so vulnerable that she also must shun formal ties with either of the contending global alignments. By one of these, nevertheless, her own national independence is ultimately protected. Under the stress of a herculean effort to unify the state and renovate Indian society, there is much to be said for a program of genuine neutrality. What vexes well-wishers of India is a false neutrality, a failure to observe true impartiality between East and West—undue appeasement of the one side from which danger may come, bias against the side by which India's own security is, in the last analysis, preserved.

Two of Moraes's concluding observations about Nehru and Nehru's India should be cited. On the subject of present trends, regret is expressed over the loss of Vallabhbhai Patel who, had he lived, might have provided a necessary check. "But in India today there is no one to restrain or guide Nehru. He is Caesar. And from Caesar one can appeal only to Caesar." Yet this is a Caesar who is dictatorial in manner but not in authority; who holds office by virtue of the esteem he enjoys, and, to the inestimable credit of all concerned, by an open electoral process. What happens when such a Caesar vacates his throne, when the Prime Minister has to be replaced? Moraes expects that, under normal circumstances, control will rest with a group within the

Congress party—one which will be apt to veer from left to right of center. Under abnormal circumstances, on the other hand, a swing to extremes may be envisaged—first to the extreme right, next to the extreme left. Summing it all up, Moraes feels that the presence of Nehru at the helm will be vital for at least another seven years. But it is essential for the whole free world that India, the most populous of democracies, stick to her chartered course. In that larger context also, Jawaharlal Nehru may, with all his foibles, be an indispensable man.

Arab Self-Understanding

By WALTER Z. LAQUEUR

THE IDEAS OF ARAB NATIONALISM, by HAZEM ZAKI NUSEIBEH. Cornell University Press. 227 pp. \$4.00.

MR. HAZEM ZAKI NUSEIBEH, a former Jordan representative on the UN Mixed Armistice Commission in Jerusalem—and a Princeton graduate in political science—has written a book which, though controversial and at times rather polemical in character, will be of considerable interest for all students of the genesis and orientation of Arab political thinking. The author points out, quite correctly, that the interest of Western scholars has mainly been concentrated on classical studies of the old Arab-Islamic legacy; there has been no serious study of the ideas of modern Arab nationalism. In his quest for the roots of Arab nationalism he differentiates among three sources: the pre-Islamic, the Islamic (which extended to the 19th century) and the modern era. What is known as *al yahiliya*, the state of ignorance, the centuries before the emergence of Islam, produced some rudimentary cultural and social consciousness that is not very relevant to latter day developments, if only because it was restricted to the Arabian peninsula.

To Islam, on the other hand, Arabism owes practically everything: "the birth of a nation, the birth of a state, the birth of a national history and the birth of a civilization," hence the sense of mission of Arab nationalism, its strength—and also

the source of its many weaknesses. In view of the universalism of Islam, there has been no provision in Islam for a specific Arab nationalism, the whole community of believers being regarded as one Islamic people. Nuseibeh maintains that "it is now realized, at least by the leaders of thought, that in order to forge a progressive and homogeneous nation religion must be taken out of politics." But actually not a single Arab government has yet made the choice between nationalism and pan-Islamism. Nasser's Egypt, out of conviction or political expediency, has very much intensified its pan-Islamic propaganda by way of the "Islamic Congress" and other media. On the ideological level, too, the "establishment of a unified Islamic nation" has again been put on the agenda (in a book published by the Egyptian propaganda ministry, and provided with an introduction by Nasser himself, *The Islamic Call* by Mohammed M. Atta, Cairo, 1956, in Arabic and English). Outside religious circles there is less fervent belief in the present day mission of Islam, because it has remained so rigid, has passed through no reformation and consequently has been less adaptable to the modern world than any other world religion. Nuseibeh cautiously notes the belief that "Arab civilization has not entirely spent itself as a spiritual force"; this assumption, he says, is based mainly "on the disillusionment with the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of modern [Western] civilization." He should have added that the "bankruptcy of modern civilization"—to accept his argument for a moment—takes place on a somewhat higher level than the disintegration of Islam. For most of the Arab intelligentsia, Islam is a spent force: Islamic missionary activities may have some success in Equatorial Africa, but the university students of the Arab capitals and the Arab intelligentsia in general meanwhile merrily adopt "bankrupt modern civilization" or its outward trappings, at any rate.

Nuseibeh, himself basically a Westerner, does not underrate the impact of the West on the Arab national movement and notes that the idea of Arab nationalism had begun among Christian intellectuals (in

Lebanon and Syria) before it did among the Moslems. He welcomes the recession of the racial and religious basis of Arab nationalism and the increasing secularization. But secularization means that new symbols and ideological motivations have to be found, and at this point his historical judgments and observations cease to be reliable. Nuseibeh regards the Arab rebellion of 1916 "as worthy a title deed as any to nationhood which provided a living history, a new milestone in the ideological development of Arab nationalism." This assertion is highly debatable, not only because the political and military significance of the "Arab rebellion" has been consistently overplayed by many Arabs and some Western historians. Not the objective importance of a given historical event but its subjective impact is the decisive criterion. However, it simply is not true that the "Arab rebellion" had any great effect on the national movement in Egypt, the leading country in the Arab world. Not a single Egyptian historian would regard the "Arab rebellion" a milestone in the ideological development of Arab nationalism. Of equally doubtful character is Nuseibeh's attempt to explain the specific destructive features which have been so prominent in Arab nationalism.

These, he maintains, are the outcome of the bitter disillusionment which followed the First World War and the failure of the allies to honor their pledges to the Arabs. "The so-called anti-Westernism does not antedate the imposition of Western imperialism, particularly after 1918." True, many promises were not honored, but this alone would hardly be enough to impress the particular stamp of pessimism, and cynicism, "the bitter monotone distinguished more by what it opposes than by what it proposes." The struggle against foreign domination and for national independence has been protracted in many countries; there have been similar—and worse—unfilled promises and reversals elsewhere. But neither the Italian nor the Indian national movement (to choose two at random) ever developed such pronounced negative characteristics during the many years of their struggle. Nor is it

true that anti-Westernism emerged only in the second half of the 19th century—more specifically after 1918. Xenophobia is not a specifically Arabic trait, but its particular virulence in the Middle East had been reported by many foreign visitors long before the imposition of Western imperialism. This may be part of the heritage of Islam and it may have more complicated historical reasons. But it cannot be explained away.

NUSEIBEH criticizes the views which two distinguished Arabists developed in articles that attracted attention a few years ago.* Hourani argued that democratic regimes had not shown themselves capable of producing efficient government in the Middle East, and that political life in the Arab world was reverting again to the patterns of the Mamluk and Ottoman days (co-operation between the military oligarchy, the permanent government officials and the learned class). Prof. Lewis explored the qualities or tendencies in Islamic civilization and society which might either facilitate or impede the advance of Communism, and found much to facilitate and very little to impede, "for the political history of Islam is one of almost unrelieved autocracy."

Historians tend sometimes to overrate the importance of historical parallels which though interesting in themselves are not really very relevant to concrete present day problems. If one finds, for instance, that the response of university students in India, Egypt and South American countries is very similar, there is not much sense in tracing the respective cultural or religious heritages of these countries. More important than influences dating back to the past is the common situation that has developed as the result of the disintegration of traditions. The discussion of whether the authoritarian elements in Islam (as Prof. Lewis argues) or the democratic ideas (as Nuseibeh maintains) have

* Albert Hourani, "The Decline of the West in the Middle East," *International Affairs*, April 1953.

Prof. Bernard Lewis, "Communism and Islam," *International Affairs*, January 1954.

been stronger is an interesting question in the history of ideas in the Middle East. But it is not the most important problem so far as the Middle East in 1957 is concerned.

In the second part of his book Nuseibeh reviews the ideas of modern Arab political thinkers, from the 19th century reformers through Rida and Kawakabi to such very recent books as Khalid Muhammad Khalid's *Min huna nabda* ("From here we start"). This makes difficult reading through no fault of the author: the Arab genius does not shine brightly in the field of political theory (or politics in general). Of those reviewed by the author, some are practically unreadable in view of their combination of utter confusion with extreme verbosity (a criticism which, in all fairness, concerns not only Arab political theorists). Others are essentially poets or novelists (such as Taha Husayn, Tawfiq al Hakim, and others) whose political ideas come in as *obiter dicta* or by implication but have not been systematically developed.

NUSEIBEH makes some acute observations about nationalist propaganda by the Communists in the Arab world: "Communism makes no serious attempt to accommodate itself to Arab nationalism. Of nationalism generally it is acutely aware: but it is a stereotype of nationalism, an abstract, lifeless, colorless, phenomenon, related only incidentally and casually to the aspiration of a specific people inhabiting a specific geographic territory and sharing a unique cultural heritage." The author gives much thought and space to the problem of social change which he regards as the key issue, but this attempt to provide some constructive suggestions is the weakest part of his study. He should not be judged too harshly for this: There are no ready solutions for many political and social problems of the Middle East.

The argument of the author is, in brief, that in the Arab countries a catastrophic break in social continuity has occurred: the Arabs imported not only new technology but also new ideas which did not correspond to their existing social condi-

tions and needs and therefore intensified the general dislocation. Both the "extreme Westernists" and the Communists have some concrete contribution to make to the aims and the techniques of social change. Nuseibeh realizes that it is not enough to send Arab students to Western universities to learn positive science and technology. He admits that modern science is not merely a set of tools and techniques, but he thinks nevertheless that the foreign student has neither the time nor the need for a type of more basic cultural schooling. Both Westernism and Marxism take a dim view of a uniquely Arab orientation in which they see few intrinsic virtues. (The sharp differentiation between Westernism and Marxism in this context seems uncalled for, because Marxism is a radical secularist Western theory.) What the author favors in contrast is a "distinct national orientation which must traverse largely uncharted territory in the socio-economic area . . . to bring out and inculcate what are thought to be unique national attributes, and equally important, to transform archaic concepts and institutions into viable and efficient organs." Thus Nuseibeh favors a mixed economy: private enterprise, pure and unadulterated, he correctly realizes, is out of the question. Radical socialism or statism seems to him also impractical in view of the inability of the administrative machinery to shoulder this task.

WHAT then is the solution? Nuseibeh sees some ray of hope in the fact that the Arab approach to various forms of economic enterprise is empirical rather than doctrinaire. If this were true it would merely betray the impact of Anglo-Saxon political experience—after all, another form of Western influence. But the "empiricists" are now a small minority both among the Arab intelligentsia and the officialdom. Most of them have come out strongly in favor of what they call "socialism," behind which all kinds of confused ideas and superstitions are hidden; it has little if anything in common with what is generally known as socialism in the West. But it is some form of statism inasmuch as

all hopes are pinned on state intervention and control. Arab nationalism needs, Nuseibeh concludes, "a synthesis of current ideas into a coherent whole, a total conception of ideology conformable to the fundamental unity of human experience, to steer it across the turbulent waters of social change. Ideas about improvement of many aspects of national life are abundant, but they are scattered and unconnected." Such an attempt to create a "synthetic national ideology" is bound to fail. The Arabs have not recently or for many generations past produced any original ideas about social reform. There is nothing derogatory in this statement. How many nations have developed original ideas in this respect? The many "ideas about the improvement of many aspects of national life" which Nuseibeh mentions, are not specifically Arab, some are also mutually exclusive.

It should not be considered an act of treason to admit this. On the contrary, such a realization is a prerequisite for true progress in the Arab world. Both "Westerners" and "Marxists" are quite correct in seeing few if any intrinsic virtues in a uniquely Arab orientation, and even such a sympathetic observer of Arab nationalism as Nuseibeh has failed to establish whether such ideas exist and what their specific qualities are. There is a strong national consciousness which has developed in response to foreign domination. But its character has been almost entirely negative, since the goal of national independence has been achieved. They fought hard to gain independence, but once they reached this stage they did not know how to use the new freedom. There is only one way open to effect social change in the Arab world: radical modernization. This can be achieved on "Western" lines (by way of socialist reformism on a Kemalist pattern) or according to the Stalinist-Maoist recipe for the industrialization of backward countries. There is no third way. The specific "Arab orientation" is synonymous with confusion. If the decision has not already been made, it will be in the very near future. But this is not the time to create synthetic ideologies or to wait fatalistically for the emergence of

some specific Arab solutions, which may, or may not, emerge one day.

A Book!

By LIONEL ABEL

THE TRIUMPH, By X. First Novels Publishers.

X HAS written a book. But consider what this means! A book! Some hundreds of pages of typing paper had to be covered, read, corrected, reread, and what is more, liked. There had to be sleepless nights, many a false start, heartbreaking stops, suspicions that one might have been better employed at some other task, dreams, hopes, fears, labors, far beyond what is ordinarily required of a person in his mid-twenties, as X, according to his publishers, is. A book! But that means reading so many books, bad books that do you no good at all, books too good to do you any good, for you cannot equal their authors, at least while you are in your mid-twenties. A book! What a fantastic amount of fortitude, energy and sacrifice must have been needed for X to produce the book he has no doubt aptly entitled *The Triumph*!

But whatever sacrifices were made in writing *The Triumph*, one thing is sure, the goal was reached. Indisputably, incontrovertibly, *The Triumph* is a book. A good book? Now what has that to do with it? That would be the consummation of some other kind of project than the one X undertook. An interesting book? This question, too, is, on consideration, quite beside the point. A book is none the less a book even when not particularly interesting. A book cannot be talked out of being a book, which is its aim, or was its author's, by being told that it is not new, exciting, profound, or what have you, that people have praised books for being. After all, the terms of critical praise which critics apply to books are merely adjectives, and as everybody knows, adjectives can hardly be as important as the noun they modify. Beautiful, revelatory, charming, wise, all these words which have been applied and, of course, misapplied, to many books, relate to them finally as accidents to sub-

stances. And who is going to regard a substance as less important than its accidents? So whatever one may think is the proper adjective to be associated with X's book, the fact is that dominating all such possible adjectives, serenely undismayed, and, of course, undazzled by them, there remains the substance from which every single one of them must take its meaning, the book which X has undoubtedly written.

The Triumph is a novel, and novels contain characters. X's novel is no exception to this rule. Unquestionably it contains characters. Of what kind? We shall dismiss this question on grounds similar to those which made us dismiss our question about the quality of the book as a whole. No, we shall not discuss the character of X's characters. It is hard to see how any such discussion would improve our judgment or advance our understanding of this work. X's characters are characters, and surely this is what counts. This is what makes them capable of being in a book, and finally, between book-ends. I am absolutely satisfied that the characters of *The Triumph* are entitled to be taken for what they represent themselves as being, to wit, characters. So who is to be dissatisfied with them? X was not, neither shall I be.

A novel is supposed to tell a story. Here, again, X has clearly not faltered, fumbled, or misunderstood what he was about. *The Triumph* tells a story, never mind about what! To be sure, other stories have been told about other characters and quite different events. Some stories are "better" than other stories—who can help that?—but when you consider the matter more deeply, more philosophically, is not one forced to conclude that "better" and "worse" in this connection have a purely relative import? For the fact that stories are told at all is obviously of greater significance than the particular quality of any particular story. Would not the most modern philosophers, the most profound and most German of them—everybody knows that the most profound philosophers are to be found in Germany—would not these great minds all say at once, without even having to reflect, that the fact that reality is capable of being storyized is the prime

fact, the one we must come back to, no matter what stories we read? That is what they would say, and who are we to disagree with them? *The storyization of the real*, this is the important revelation made by every story, told or written, whether we happen to enjoy it or not. Now I submit, in *The Triumph* reality is storyized, no question about that. The novel reports events which did not occur in isolation from the others, but were formed into a sequence by the author, X, who foresaw in each particular event the germ of the event that was to follow it, made them all fit, dovetail and pattern themselves into the story-structure of his book.

IT HAS been claimed that a book must have a message. Though, let it be noted, many people have denied that a message is really necessary. Did not a famous American poet say that a poem should not "mean" but "be"? It is true that this was said about a poem, not about a book, but if the sayer had thought poems so greatly different from books, would he, a poet, have become a librarian? Let us not tolerate the thought. In any case, many people have claimed that a book need not have a message, and quoting Macleish on the poem, have said: "Let the book just be." This attitude nowadays is not universally accepted, however, and there are still a great many people to be found who are capable of asking in irritation: "For God's sake, what does the damn book mean?" The question which can be appropriately raised about *The Triumph* in this context is: From which view is X's book the more satisfactory accomplishment? Will it be better thought of by those who assert that a book should just *be*, or by those who insist that it should *mean*, and that it is a scandal for a book not to mean something? My judgment is as follows: *The Triumph* is equally satisfactory from either point of view. Why? *The Triumph* means to be.

I would ask the reader to consider once more the full extent of X's accomplishment. Let me repeat what it is: he has written a book. And I would ask the reader to think once more of what a book is, not now in the subjective sense of effort and

error, trial, torment, varying success and failure, but rather to think of what a book is in the objective, that is to say, the *spiritual* sense. For Hegel, the whole universe would one day enter into a book, and people after that event would have nothing better to do than to read it. For the poet Mallarmé, the aim and purpose of all creation, including the constellations, the vast spaces of untrackable sky, and the billions of explosions of fantastic suns, had one

significance only: that of being put into a book. Now nobody has yet written the book Hegel envisaged, and nobody has written the one that Mallarmé desired to write. But any book which anyone succeeds in writing—and in publishing, for that is part of a book's reality—represents an effort, however small, toward the total setting down in words of whatever it is we are. X, in writing his book *The Triumph*, is part of a great design.

Book Reviewers and Contributors to this Issue

CARL ALPERT, who now resides in Haifa, Israel, is a member of the staff of the Haifa Technion.

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GREGOR ARONSON, a prominent Jewish writer of the Russian emigration after the Bolshevik Revolution, is a frequent contributor to *Zukunft*, *Novoie Russkoye Slovo*, and other periodicals.

EARL BROWDER was the leader of the American Communist Party before and during World War II, and was expelled from the party for "right deviationism" in 1945.

EUGENE LYONS, an important and widely-read authority on the Soviet Union, is on the staff of the *Reader's Digest*.

THEODORE FRANKEL is a young free-lance writer whose work has often appeared in this magazine. Mr. Frankel was last represented here with a story, "A Measure of Guilt," in Summer 1956.

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LEO HABER is a poet who has attracted much attention for his work published in *MIDSTREAM* and *Commentary*. He teaches English in the Lawrence, L. I., high school.

DANNIE ABSE, British poet, novelist and physician, has just published his second novel, *Some Corner of a Foreign Field*.

JASCHA KESSLER is a poet and short story writer whose work has appeared in *Epoch* and other periodicals.

comment

Herzl Remembered

To the Editor of MIDSTREAM:

How moving it was to read Marie Syrkin's review of Herzl's diaries in the Autumn number of *Midstream*. How keenly it brought back memories of feuilletons, of articles read in the somewhat tattered copies of *Die Welt* from my father's shelves. But precisely in the light of those memories the article suddenly seemed out of register. It seemed out of touch with Herzl, his world and with those who in the formulation and dissemination of any movement are crucially important, his nearest followers, those who grew up with his image constantly before their eyes. Marie Syrkin's is a penetrating and gracious intellect; yet it is quite unattuned to the *feeling* that irradiates Herzl. And looking back it seems to me that with Herzl, feeling is a great deal—it is the source from which even the most realistic arguments and plans spring.

My own father was a young boy in the Austro-Hungarian Empire when the first Zionist Congresses were held. Any information about Herzl and his writings had to be read in secret. To spread the news of Herzl's endeavors, my father founded the first Zionist youth movement in his town. It met behind closed doors and shuttered windows to learn Hebrew in preparation for going to the "Judenstaat". To him the fear of being deprived of the school uniform and expelled from the Gymnasium for Zionist activities was not as great as the passion and enthusiasm Herzl's example had kindled in him.

When, later, the Herzl diaries came out, they were a revelation to him and his friends—something to be devoured at first, and then lived with and absorbed by constant reading and rereading.

To European Zionists who grew up with the tradition of Herzl still alive everywhere—to them Herzl's writing and diaries must of necessity have a different, a more emotional meaning, than to the new readers of the diaries today.

From 1915 my father was in Switzerland, where I grew up. I suppose the Zionist Congresses, many of which were

held in Switzerland, helped a great deal to keep alive emotionally the tradition as well as the legend of Herzl. I remember distinctly what impression the huge backcloth picture of Herzl made on me as a youngster. How thrilled and awed at the same time I would be if my father would point out or introduce me to those who were Herzl's earliest associates. The Congress roused everyone deeply. It was all so much alive, so utterly important, that it seemed quite in key that everyone wore evening dress to the opening ceremony of the Congress. Marie Syrkin smiles perhaps a little at Herzl's sense of dress and elegance. Certainly the ritual values of dress were dear to him as to his age and milieu, and it is surely his tradition in this respect that was perpetuated in the high European formalism of the inter-war Congresses. But it is a fact, measurable in the memories of those of us who were there, that as long as Israel was still stateless, and this may be a significant point, the ritualism kept alive the presence of Herzl and acted as a force palpably heightening the significance of the occasion. Everyone participated in the feeling of devotional *Feierlichkeit*. I feel certain that many a Jew who came from surroundings where religious observances were not adhered to experienced that same feeling of belonging as many an Orthodox Jew does when he goes to *Kol Nidrei*.

So to us Herzl and his struggles were alive. We lived with Herzl constantly. Those friends, colleagues, followers who came to my father's house in the years afterward and talked about him, represented for me a continuity of the original vision. In the context of that continuity there is nothing odd, nothing stilted or unreal about the diaries and the writer as he reveals himself there. Normally all the flavor of the period and its society is present, but not with the result of making Herzl any the less vital. The man of his magniloquent period is essentially and recognizably the magnanimous man who dreamed a dream and acted his dream, as I heard him described again and again each year, and especially at the time when the biennial Congress came round, as I

was growing up. And conversely in the context of the diaries, the sense of continuity thus instilled in me is justified. For looking back, I might believe that what I heard around the table or in the study was not the report of a man as he had lived but the growth of a legend, leaving the man behind, lost, enfolded in the multiple additions of the fancies of a second generation. The diaries show that the legend and the man are not far apart—they endorse so much that I heard.

PNINA S. WEINERT

Hollywood Scholarship

To the Editor of MIDSTREAM:

WHATEVER else Cecil De Mille may have wrought in his "translated and improved" edition of *The Ten Commandments*, he did not, as Henry Popkin writes ("It Was This Way . . . See?" Winter 1957), "get his Testaments mixed" or "introduce Herod's motive for the slaughter of the innocents" in his treatment of Pharaoh's decision to slay the newly born Hebrew children. A Midrash has it that before Moses was born Pharaoh had a dream which his wizards interpreted to mean that a boy would be born who would bring him ruin. There is a similar Midrash about King Nimrod and the patriarch Abraham, and indeed, this myth is not peculiar to Judeo-Christian folklore. For the many millions De Mille spent in producing *The Ten Commandments* he claims to have gotten, *inter alia*, a thorough scholarly researching of his story. This claim can easily be checked in the recently published *Moses and Egypt: The Documentation to the Motion Picture The Ten Commandments*, by Henry S. Noerdlinger.

MOSHE KOHN

New York City

MR. POPKIN WRITES:

THE amount of money invested in *The Ten Commandments* is no more a guarantee of sound scholarship than it is of dramatic art or even of accurate grammar. The makers of this film did get their Testaments mixed when they explained Pharaoh's slaughter of the Hebrew children.

First, a comparison of the two canonic texts, the Old Testament and the New, leaves no doubt that the film is closer to

Herod's motivation in the slaughter of the innocents. Herod slays the children because he fears the coming of a savior among them. Pharaoh, on the other hand, indicates his annoyance at the great numbers of the Hebrews. When the massacre is ordered, we must assume that his purpose is to thin out their ranks. Now, these are the texts of supreme authority, and they are also the texts that the audience might be expected to recognize.

Mr. Kohn traces the movie Pharaoh's motivation to a Midrash, a text of authority inferior to that of the Old Testament. A Midrash supplements the Old Testament; it cannot contradict the previous account. The midrashic version therefore belongs within the context of the Old Testament. In consequence, the Midrash tells us that Pharaoh was annoyed that the Hebrews were so numerous, and in addition it tells us that he was disturbed by the prophecy that a Hebrew savior would be born. If the film gives us Midrash, it gives us Midrash torn out of its necessary context. The film's Pharaoh is disturbed by the prophecy, but he has no inclination to lessen the numbers of the Hebrews. As a matter of fact, the film explicitly contradicts the Old Testament. The movie Pharaoh tells us in so many words that he does not want to thin out the Hebrews because he wants as many slaves as possible. That leaves the midrashic addition standing by itself, without the account to which it is added. So, either the film gives us a hunk of violated, uprooted, mistreated Midrash, or else it accurately transfers Herod's motive from the New Testament.

The technique of execution in the Midrash has a peculiar importance. The children are drowned, and this justifies the subsequent drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. In the film the children die by the sword, perhaps because water is colorless, blood is red, and the film was made in color. However, in this detail the film is again closer to the New Testament, which does not specify the means of death and thereby leads us to suppose what would be likeliest—that the children die by the sword. This natural interpretation is reflected in a medieval play, in which Herod's soldiers slay the children on stage. The staging of this scene must have been very much like the corresponding action in *The Ten Commandments*. But the film's action does not resemble the Midrash.

from the four corners

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

knowledge that all the prisoners were about to be returned, and why should anyone wish to endanger the prospects of his proper return by making an untimely dash for a questionable freedom? The gentlemen's agreement worked well.

The guest was usually dressed in an Israel army uniform without any distinguishing insignia. He was introduced to his host within the confines of the prison camp, the two usually shook hands, he entered the car, and then the prison gates swung wide open.

The first hour was always the most difficult. During the first test period some Egyptians were genuinely worried and feared that they were being taken out for "a ride" in gangster fashion. Away from the security of numbers and the protection of the Geneva Convention, alone in the Israel backwoods—who would ever know what had happened to a lone Egyptian prisoner? This early fear disappeared after the first adventurers reported on their experiences. Though none of them dared to be openly enthusiastic about the trips, it is known that some managed to get out for trips on several days, in at least one case by answering quickly to the call of a name which the genuine bearer had not heard. There is some reason to believe that a "market" in invitations also existed, with some of the more prosperous prisoners buying the rights from their colleagues, although the Israel authorities sought to make this impossible and tried to guarantee at least one outside visit for each officer.

Another attempt to ease the atmosphere was the encouragement of Israelis to make it a family affair by bringing the wife along.

What did one talk about at first? The weather, family, what's it like in Cairo now, have a cigarette—take the whole pack. It was difficult to get a natural conversation started, because in all in-

stances the host wished to avoid any subject that might evoke unpleasant memories for the officer. One could hardly ask him to tell how he had been captured. There was every desire to avoid what might have even the slightest suspicion of a taunt.

There were specific suggestions where to go, but the trips were not limited to these. Factories, schools, hospitals, villages, kibbutzim were among the places visited, but the kibbutz undoubtedly made the most profound impression. Here were model agricultural villages where men and women, working for the common good, without compulsion, had conquered desert and had built thriving communities. Conscious of the great need to revolutionize the life of the poverty-stricken Egyptian *fellaheen*, the officers perhaps saw in the kibbutz one type of solution. Many referred to the experimental villages which Nasser has constructed of late, but acknowledged that these were still little more than show places.

The questions about the kibbutz were basic. What happens if a child wishes to attend a university? Who decides assignment of chores? What happens to a man's family when he gets sick? And one thoughtful prisoner inquired if the kibbutz took care of a man's family if he were by chance captured by an enemy!

We noted that the personalities of the Egyptians did not begin to unfold till late in the day. The prisoners all appeared to have adopted the attitude: We shall accept this strange hospitality, but we shall not sell our souls. We shall maintain the necessary reserve. Thus it was that many of the "tourists" began by discounting what they were seeing.

"We're doing this in Egypt, too," was a frequent comment. This big industrial plant? We have bigger ones in Egypt. Upon observing a group of Israeli soldiers on a long field trip, with full packs, the host remarked that they were probably on a 60 kilometer hike.

"Our soldiers march 90 kilometers a day," was the rejoinder.

Such reactions were the natural response of a proud people, and the Israelis respected the Egyptians for it. Yet there can be no doubt that as the day wore on, and one scene succeeded another, a lasting impression was left. The most widely quoted observation of one thoughtful Egyptian was: "If Abdel Nasser could see what we are seeing now, there would be peace between Egypt and Israel!"

SHORT of going into military installations (though even this was sometimes included), the trips went to all corners of Israel. A request to see the Ibrahim el Awal, the Egyptian destroyer which had been captured when it sought to shell Haifa early in the Sinai war, brought an immediate trip to Haifa port.

The hosts were encouraged to take the visitor home and show him an average Israel household. During the weeks which this program lasted, the project was kept in official secrecy. But the number of people who were "in the know" grew from day to day as more hosts participated, more neighbors were called in, more places were visited, and more of the Egyptians were from time to time seen on the streets. The children were told at the last moment who the guest was going to be—and they kept the secret too.

In our family the project was discussed for some days in advance, and we cryptically called it "Operation Achmed." As it turned out, our guest was not named Achmed, but the name stuck.

The family environment produced interesting reactions in many of the visitors. One, visibly moved, swept our youngest child into his arms and kissed her, because, he said, she reminded him of his own daughter back in Cairo. Another talked about his engagement and eagerly looked forward to his return and the coming marriage. There was the usual small talk around the table. Drobny, Egypt's leading tennis star, came in for his share of the conversation.

There were many physicians among the prisoners, some of them relatively young men who were serving their period of compulsory service with the army. One of these, a dermatologist, examined the skin of his host's child, and commented that indications appeared to show a Vitamin D deficiency. There was good natured joshing about the free medical advice.

After the meal, the talk would automatically veer to politics.

Several facts emerged with monotonous regularity. These men hated the British. They had great admiration for Nasser; in their eyes he was a hero who had at last restored pride and prestige to the downtrodden Egyptian nation. Russia? Egypt was against Russia and Communism, but Nasser was clever enough to take what they had to offer without getting himself entangled. America? She had her own interests, and these came before anybody else's. Nasser had America's number.

When the discussion turned to the Israel-Egypt conflict the assertions were less emphatic. The host would press his point just so far in order not to violate his hospitality, and the guest was mindful of his position as guest, and did not speak his mind as clearly as he might had circumstances been different.

During the afternoon our daughter showed our Egyptian guest her Arab textbooks and carried on a simple Arab conversation with him. He was amazed to learn that Arab is a compulsory subject in most of Israel's high schools, and acknowledged that the standard of the texts and our daughter's knowledge of the language were extremely high.

The later hours of the day were variously spent. Some families went to the movies. Others took the visitor for a stroll on the main streets, window-shopping. The common language was almost always English, though many of Israel's old-timers who speak Arabic fluently talked with the visitors in their language.

There were frequent meetings with Israeli Arabs. When it was requested,

the Egyptians were taken on visits to Arab villages. There were chance meetings with Arabs in the streets. The officers were always permitted to strike up conversations as freely as they wished. At the Technion they closely queried the Arab students regarding the freedom allowed them, and were surprised to find the boys treated on the same level as their Jewish colleagues. The visitors had believed that Arabs in Israel were treated like slaves.

In one home they asked an Arab maid how she was treated. She praised Allah. They referred to her as Palestinian, and she properly corrected them: she was an Israeli. Our knowledge of Arabic was much too slight to enable us to follow all the nuances of the conversation, but the participants seemed to be enjoying themselves, and the maid was therefore invited to draw up a chair and join the family circle. This was a shock to the visitors and an awkward silence ensued—broken moments later by the serving of the coffee.

Conditions in the prison camp being what they were, barbering facilities were not always available, and toward the latter stages of the operation almost every officer asked if he could have the opportunity to get a haircut. Since the host was footing the bill, one of the guests went whole hog and ordered a shave and shampoo as well. The barbers in and around Haifa soon learned to recognize the khaki-clad customers for what they were.

PRISON life is not pleasant at best, but the officers seldom complained. Indication of the treatment they received in the camp is shown by the fact that they daily received the *Jerusalem Post*, and were thus informed of world events. One officer told me that while it was true that nothing was ever cut out of the newspapers, there were days when the *Post* was not delivered at all. He was under the impression that these were days when we did not want them to read the news. I asked if he had ever considered that it might also have been due to inefficiency in the delivery sched-

ule—as sometimes happens here. He was unconvinced, and I accepted his opinion as a great compliment to Israel efficiency.

I never heard of a single instance of impolite treatment of the Egyptian prisoners by anyone with whom they came in contact. They were everywhere treated with respect, and even Israelis who admitted that they did not approve of the "coddling campaign," as they termed it, refrained from any hostile or even unfriendly act. Yet it was clear that many of the Egyptians felt distinctly ill-at-ease. Wherever they went, heads turned and people gaped. This feeling of discomfort was frequently obvious when they were with Israeli Arabs. Before the latter, the visitors seemed to feel, they should have appeared as conquerors, yet here they came as prisoners of war.

Sometimes they may have had the feeling that they were on exhibition, though this was certainly not intended. One of my Achmeds, offered a choice between a casual walk down Herzl St. and an early return to camp, chose to return.

I think I know how he must have felt. One day as we made the rounds in the heart of Nahalal, word spread regarding the identity of the visitor, and a small group of children gathered to watch us. There were three in our party: the local guide whom they all knew, the man in army uniform, whom they of course took to be an Israeli guard, and one man in civilian dress—I. I happened to catch the gaze of one little girl. She stared directly into my face with a fascinated, horror-struck expression, mouth partly agape. To her, I was the enemy. For a moment her look made me feel strangely uncomfortable, and I began to understand the feeling of unease on the part of our guest.

Late in January and early February the prisoners were returned to Egypt in groups of 500, and Israel received her four prisoners in return. The latter told of torture and beatings and indig-

nities they suffered in Egypt, and there was a chill in the public attitude toward Israel's own program for the Egyptian prisoners. In the final days it was therefore difficult to find voluntary escorts, and a few of Nasser's officers never got to take the sightseeing trip.

What effect will these visits have upon the 200 officers and the hundreds of sergeants who went on their sightseeing tours? What will they tell their families, their neighbors, and the military interrogators who will undoubtedly question them at length upon their return?

Whatever the net effect may be, there is no doubt that the project was daring in conception and courageous in implementation. This was more than treating an enemy like a human being. It was more than an attempt to convince him that we do not hate him. It was not a mere gesture to win the applause and good will of the world, nor an indication solely of Israel's desire for peace. It was all of these—and more. It was a revolutionary innovation in the etiquette of war, and perhaps the most progressive step in prisoner-of-war relations since the International Red Cross assumed responsibility for prisoners.

There was no expectation that the program would transform enemies into friends. It was expected at the outset that some of the Egyptians would sneer at the treatment, and perhaps regard it as softness on the part of Israel. The surprising thing is that so few acted this way.

At this very moment many of them may be scoffing at the program, or telling their intelligence officers all the "valuable information" which they think they garnered during the free day. But most of us in Israel are convinced that this program will have left its impression. These men, who consider themselves our enemies, will have been moved to be a little less enemies—and may have moved, consciously or unconsciously, one step closer to being friends and neighbors in a Middle East at peace.

Our Achmed signed his name and address in our family guest book. With mutual good will, we hope someday to pay him a return visit, as peaceful tourists in Cairo.

The Bread of Affliction— @ \$25 a Day

By A. DANZIGER

OF THE many meanings of Passover, the one that no doubt comes to mind last is that it celebrates one of the four Jewish New Years; but to the Jewish hotel owners it marks with a vengeance the change of their "seasons." Up in the summer resorts of the Catskills where scores of hotels that have been shut up all winter are opened for the holiday, Pesach constitutes a kind of trial run for the spring and summer, while down in Lakewood, N. J., it is the last arduous holiday of the winter season—afterward the hotels will be boarded up against the heat of summer and the New Jersey mosquitoes.

As befits the occasion, the preparations begin early. Weeks ahead of time large ads appear in all the metropolitan New York newspapers announcing "worldfamous" cantors and choirs and urging the public to make their reservations early. Then the stewards begin ordering vast amounts of matzo's and other foods *kosher l'Pesach*. Almost all Jewish hotels are "strictly kosher," though some are more so than others. Thus, all of them will change their dishes and take the liquor out of the bars, but only a few will *kasher* the silver, and even in the more observant hotels the expensive porcelain service plates are not always likely to be changed, and the waitresses and busboys are apt to mix meat and dairy silver when they run short.

To see what Passover in such a hotel is like let's look at one of the larger ones in Lakewood, accommodating several hundred people. It is late afternoon before the first Seder night and the hotel is humming with activity. Out

in the parking lot Cadillacs and Lincolns are arriving by the minute; in the lobby the bellhops are jumping like crickets, and upstairs the chambermaids scurry like beetles from room to room, making last-minute changes. In the kitchen the nations of the earth are toiling for Israel's holiday: Italian cooks are preparing matzah ball soup, roast beef, boiled chicken, flanken, stuffed kishke, boiled potatoes; the German pantry man fixes *k'aros* by the score, deftly putting the roast egg, the *karpas*, the *charoseth* in their correct places, while the Chinese saladmen are making mountains of gefillte fish, prepared after a time-honored Galician recipe. In the middle of the kitchen stand two enormous kettles with hundreds of peeled hard boiled eggs, and there is another kettle filled with salt water.

The dining room, too, has been festively prepared. A huge, barnlike room, it looks festive all year round in its decor of wine red carpet, pink and grey walls, green pillars and purple ceiling; it is even more so now that the hotel's handymen have erected a two-tiered dais at one end. On the upper tier the cantor and the rabbi will sit, flanked by the owners and two special guests; the lower tier is for the choir.

While the waitresses—college girls, elderly Jewish women, Polish miners' daughters from Pennsylvania—carry the sacramental wine to the tables set with glistening linen and gleaming silver, the headwaiter and his captains sit hunched over the seating chart, puzzling where to put the check-ins. Those who are known to tip the headwaiter will get a table up front, and the notorious "stiffs" will be pushed behind a pillar or else close to the kitchen where they can hardly hear, much less see the cantor and the choir. The headwaiter's problem now is how to distinguish between the "good parties" and the "stiffs" among the unknown newcomers.

BY FIVE O'CLOCK the headwaiter has taken all his chances and completed the seating arrangements, and

when the dining room opens after the evening services in the hotel's converted night club, several hundred people are quickly and efficiently brought to their tables. (Those with a bad table now have their last chance of getting their table changed by "seeing" the headwaiter.)

It is a solid family crowd that comes at a dignified but fairly rapid pace through the dining room's open glass doors, quite different from the usual weekend crowd composed of young couples and single men and women out for fun. Now there are many parties of ten and more people, including at times three and four generations of a family, for whom this is the most convenient way of celebrating the holiday together. It is a fairly religious group—there are many, many *yarmulkas*, a sight not seen on an ordinary weekend, because for many of the older people going to the hotel is an agreeable way of avoiding the bother of *kashering* their own apartment, selling the *chometz* to the super, etc. etc. And there are hordes of children.

These people are also well-to-do. After all, the hotel charges \$25 per person per day, and an eight-day holiday for a family of four or six runs into quite a bit of money. Besides, there are tips to give: in the dining room alone, headwaiter, captain, waitress and bus-boy must be taken care of; and there are also the service manager, the bellhops, the chambermaids, elevator men, the masseur in the steam room, the locker room attendant and the life guard at the pool. Also the doorman, children's waiters, children's counselors, dance instructors, the skate boy in the rink and the lady who gives lessons in drawing and paints idealized portraits.

When all the guests are assembled in the dining room, the cantor, the rabbi and the choir, garbed in flowing white robes and stiff, high caps, march in singing and take their places on the dais. The house lights are dimmed and spotlights are thrown on the platform

and on the Israel and American flags that flank it. Standing in the center of the dais, the great Cantor Yankele waits for the noise to subside. Meanwhile he tests his voice under his breath. Though he has been a cantor for almost fifty years—ever since he was a child prodigy in his native Poland—his voice is still sweet and beautiful; and the strength of larynx which age has taken from him is now being replenished by the miracle of science: for the rest of the evening Yankele's lips will never be far from the microphone.

Incidentally, the diminutive "Yankele" which has stuck to him from his childhood is really very inappropriate, for the cantor is an aloof man. With his fine head, his large almond eyes and the regal bearing of his small body he looks very much like an oriental prince. His fee, too, is regal: four thousand dollars for conducting the two Seders and *davening Mussaf* and *Maariv* during the rest of the holiday. It is only half of what a famous opera star is rumored to get at one of the mammoth hotels in the Catskills, but it is still ten times as much as some of the "worldfamous" cantors make at Lakewood's smaller hotels.

THE large dining room is slowly falling quiet. The rabbi who assists Yankele has asked the assembly to rise, and the large crowd stands attentively and decorously in the semi-darkness. Up on the dais, bathed in white lights, Cantor Yankele raises the heavy silver goblet filled with wine and, his voice carried aloft by the fourteen voices in the choir, sings a long, elaborate and beautiful *Kiddush*. Then the house lights go on and the rabbi asks everybody to be seated, to lean back and drink the first cup of wine. Up on the dais Yankele washes his hands—most of the guests, closely packed into the dining room, do without this—and pronounces the blessing over "the fruit of the earth." Then the rabbi rises, breaks the matzah for the *afikomen*, holds his dish up to the assembly and says loudly in English, "This is the bread of afflic-

tion which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt." The hotel owner's youngest grandson climbs up on the dais to ask the Four Questions, forgets his lines, is audibly prompted and blurts out the questions in a rush. His childish voice, magnified by loudspeakers, trembles metallically in the hot, moist air.

The Seder is launched, the narrative unfolds according to its ancient order, relating how the Holy One, Blessed Be His Name, led the children of Israel out of Egypt, what miracles He performed on their behalf and what the rabbis had to say about it. Yankele's golden voice soars above the choir. Below him in the crowd, the men's lips move, the women lean back and listen silently, the older children try to follow the text in their *Haggadahs* and the smaller ones hit each other. From time to time the rabbi breaks in, announcing and explaining "We shall now partake of the second *kos*"; "thus did the wise and saintly Hillel"; and "we shall now proceed to the repast."

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The waitresses bring out the fruit salad, the gefillte fish, the matzah ball soup, another entré of ox tongue, and then the main dish, choice of roast beef, flanken, boiled chicken, roast chicken, as well as second helpings, followed by huge portions of cake baked so cunningly one would hardly know they were made with matzah meal, and finally tea.

When the meal is over the rabbi makes a show of discovering that his *afikomen* has been stolen. At last the culprit turns out to be the hotel owner's grandson. Up he goes again to collect his ransom. "What would you like?" the rabbi asks playfully. "A new bicycle? A pair of boxing gloves?" "No," the child says, "I want a piece of grandfather's new hotel in Miami." Everybody laughs, the women nod to each other—isn't that cute?

The ceremony resumes. By now it is stiflingly hot in the dining room. It is getting late and everybody is sated and tired. The crowd thins out at the edges, their attention lags, and there is a good deal of noisy conversation. Children cry, refuse to leave the table, and are dragged out by their agitated mothers. Yankele speeds up the service, and still the rabbi has to appeal again and again for quiet. He is a young rabbi, without a congregation, very deferential to Cantor Yankele (the usual relationship between rabbi and cantor has here been reversed; here the famous cantor is the boss and the rabbi his humble assistant).

Much as the rabbi wishes not to offend anybody, his sense of propriety gets the better of him and he appeals to the noisemakers to desist. Most of them pay no attention to him, but he finds moral support with the large religious family parties who sit at their tables as on islands of religiosity trying to recapture the spirit of an old fashioned Pesach at home. They cast disapproving glances around them before returning to their family singing.

The Seder is almost over and the evening approaches the final climax in

the chanting of "*Chad Gadyoh*." The choir outdoes itself. Yankele sings with all his might, the rabbi sings, the hotel owners sing and the family parties rock. Then everybody rises and joins in the "Star Spangled Banner" and "*Hatikvah*."

The first Seder is over. Chazan Yankele descends from the dais and leisurely makes his way through the milling crowd. "*Yasher koiach*, Reb Yankele," the men call out and squeeze his hand, and the women smile and say, "Chazan Krakauer, tonight you were divine." Everybody agrees it was a wonderful Seder and the best part of it is: tomorrow is another day and another Seder. There'll be more gefillte fish, more matzah balls, more meat, more cake, Chazan Yankele and the choir will sing again, and the rabbi will explain once more, "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt."

The Mysterious S. A.

By ANITA ENGLE

ONE of the great women spies of history, who has somehow remained out of the history books, died thirty-nine years ago last month in the mountain village of Zichron Yaacov, then Palestine. Her name was Sarah Aaronsohn, and she led a spy organization in Palestine which provided Allenby's forces with information about the Turkish Army, and guided the entry of the British into Palestine. The organization consisted of only twenty young people, but Allenby credits them with saving the lives of at least 30,000 British soldiers. Sarah, twenty-seven years old in October, 1917, died by her own hands after four days of torture by the Turks, who were attempting to wring from her the names and whereabouts of her colleagues.

Many people believe that Sarah Aaronsohn is the mysterious S. A. to whom T. E. Lawrence dedicated his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Lawrence may have dedicated his book to Sarah Aaron-

sohn, just as other imaginative young men dedicate poems to Grecian urns. There is, however, not an ounce of foundation to the story of the romance which pops up in the English press from time to time, always with more exotic embellishments. I was able to establish this fact conclusively only three months ago, from members of the family who still live at Zichron Yaacov.

Apart from the fact that Sarah never had any contact with Lawrence, she would have had a good laugh at Lawrence's statement "I drew these tides of men into my hands . . . to earn you freedom." She was so thoroughly capable of fighting for freedom herself. For this she forsook her sheltered life as the wife of a wealthy merchant to pit her body and wits against the forces of the Ottoman Empire. She came of tough, pioneering stock. Her parents were among the founders of Zichron, the earliest agricultural settlement in Palestine. They brought up their seven vigorous children to love the soil and to work for its redemption. Sarah worked hard, like any daughter of the soil, but led a gay, free life for all that. On her black Arab horse she dashed about the countryside by day and night, according to her mood, always trusting her quick wit to get her out of a tight situation. She knew Arabic and Turkish like a native.

She was married and living in Constantinople when war broke out. In cryptic letters to her family in Zichron, Sarah began to sound out their plans.

"Are you interesting yourself in *broderie anglaise*?" she wrote to her sister in French, which, together with Hebrew was the family language. "There are interesting things to be seen on the boulevards," she wrote another time, using the French word for boulevard, which is the Hebrew word for stamp. Under the stamps she wrote about the massacre of the Armenians—a horror which impelled Sarah to rejoin her family in Zichron, to see if they could not do something to prevent a similar and imminent fate for the helpless Jewish

community in Palestine. Her brothers and their friends decided that their most valuable service lay in providing intelligence for the British and so hasten their entry into Palestine. They took for their organization the name of Nili—the Hebrew initials of a biblical quotation "The Eternity (God) of Israel will not lie." The organizer of the underground movement was Sarah's brother, Aaron Aaronsohn, world famed as a botanist, and a man of phenomenal strength and intellect. His work had made him familiar with the terrain of Palestine, including the desert which stretched south of Turkish Palestine into British Egypt. His intimate knowledge of the Turks and their military strength was unequalled. He had long been convinced that in England lay the only hope for a Jewish national home.

AARON left Palestine, and by devious routes got to London in 1916, where he managed to break down the chronic suspicion of the War Office. He ended up at Allenby's H.Q., Cairo, where he was in charge of Palestine intelligence for the campaign which ended the war. When he disappeared into the blue, his command fell to Sarah and Absalom Feinberg. Absalom, only twenty-five, was a hero straight out of a romance. Tall, handsome, ardent, a writer of poetry, a composer of music, wise, witty, a crack shot, a dashing horseman, and so fearless that the Arabs had adopted him as their own, giving him the name of Sheik Salim.

No news came through from Aaron. Inaction, in face of growing Jewish danger, was maddening to Absalom. The one contact he had managed to establish with a friendly and understanding British naval officer at Port Said had broken down. Absalom didn't know it, but the officer, Lt. Wooley, had been taken prisoner by the Turks and only emerged at the end of the war, to become famous as the discoverer of Ur of the Chaldees.

Absalom, disguised as an Arab, set off through the Negev wastes which stretch

south from Beer Sheba, in an attempt to slip through the Turkish lines and renew contact with the British in Egypt. He was never seen again.

The entire burden of "Nili" now fell on Sarah. From January 1917 until her death in October, nine months later, this plump, sweet-voiced young woman, acting on her own responsibility, working on her own initiative, built up a network of military intelligence which stretched from Beer Sheba in the south of Palestine as far north as Beyrouth and Damascus in Syria. There was not a moment, by day or by night, that she was out of danger, or free from pressure. Pressure and even danger came from the Jewish community of Palestine whose established leaders were appalled by the dangerous manoeuvres of this handful of young people, presuming to pit themselves against the established government and German military power. Espionage was an unsavory thing in Jewish tradition. Even worse, one false move would bring certain extermination to the village of Zichron, and to the Jews everywhere under Turkish control. But Sarah was hard and unrelenting. She asked of nobody what she was not prepared to do herself, and few whom she tried to enlist for "Nili" refused to entrust their lives to her hands.

Sarah approached a doctor in an important military hospital. "What?" he demanded. "Do you think I'm going to risk my head in such a game?"

"My head is as firmly attached to my shoulders as yours is," she replied, "and anyone who calls himself a man would be proud to belong to 'Nili.'" Which he did.

Everyone who joined "Nili" did so out of sympathy with Jewish national aims, and not one made any financial profit out of his work of espionage. Every penny had to be accounted for to British H.Q., Cairo, before further allocations were made. This was so limiting and so humiliating that one of the British officers, who worked with Aaron at Cairo H.Q., spent much of the latter

part of his life compiling material for a comparison between the money expended on "Nili" and on Lawrence, and the importance of the results. (This document, incidentally, will one day appear.)

With Aaron in Cairo, for the first time since operations began two years before, "Nili" really got into full swing. As the preparations for the Palestine campaign got under way, more and more demands were made on Sarah and her organization. She supplied Allenby with detailed information as to every division in Palestine and Syria; the number and type of guns, positions, movements. In an address before the Royal Artillery Institution at Woolwich in December 1921, Lt. Gen. MacDonough, who had been Director of Military Intelligence during the war, said: "Lord Allenby knew from his intelligence in Palestine every disposition and movement of the enemy, and he was consequently able to play his own hand with assurance. In those circumstances, victory was certain."

Sarah sent the bulk of the information through the British warship which slipped down from Port Said once or twice a month. A window in the Aaronsohn vineyard high up on the mountain top acted as a guide. If the window was open, the ship crept back at night and anchored at a distance off the shore from Athlit. Members of "Nili" swam out to the ship with messages.

ONCE the intelligence network was established, Aaron kept begging Sarah to leave Palestine and come to Cairo. Allenby urged her as well, for the pace was speeding up, and the danger growing daily. But she refused, and not many weeks later the shadow of death began to fall on "Nili." A carrier pigeon sent off from Athlit to Cairo came to rest among the pigeons of a Turkish officer at Caesarea, some miles up the coast. He found the code message. Realizing that there was a spy ring operating in the vicinity, the Turks began to search the neighboring

Jewish settlements. It was only a matter of time until they reached Zichron.

Sarah destroyed all documents, and sent her colleagues into hiding. Then she, her brother, and her faithful colleague, her seventy-year-old father, waited for the arrival of the Turks. For four days Turkish and German officers tried every means of torture they knew in an attempt to wring information from Sarah. Her colleagues whom she had sent away gave themselves up, unable to remain in hiding while she suffered. None would reveal information, so it was decided to send them all off to Nazareth, for further interrogation. Sarah feared that if she suffered more, her body might force her to prove traitor. She asked permission to go to her home and change her blood-soaked clothes for the journey to Nazareth. Tied with ropes she walked through the village of Zichron for the last time.

While the guard remained outside, she went into her room. There she wrote a letter giving instructions for the care of the families who would be left bereft because of "Nili." Then, taking a revolver which she kept hidden behind a secret panel, she shot herself. She tried to shoot herself through the brain, but her strength failed her, and she only succeeded in wounding herself. She had three more days of agony before she died.

Even as she died the British had begun to land at Jaffa, and three months later Allenby received the surrender of Jerusalem.

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Every Day in Every Way . . .

By SARAH C. SCHACK

ON BROADWAY, between West 80th and West 100th Streets, there are three stores specializing in what are broadly called "Jewish religious articles." As recently as perhaps twenty-five years ago there were only a few such shops in New York, and those were

mostly confined to the Lower East Side. Now they are to be found in every predominantly Jewish neighborhood, and with a far more diversified stock. The items they offer reflect not only the affirmation by the American Jewish middle class of their religious faith but also their conscious, sometimes self-conscious, interest in Israel.

The proprietor of one of the Broadway stores said to me, "We are helping Jews in America to carry on their Jewish way of life from the cradle to the grave." Typical of all these shops, his stock ranges from a greeting card on the birth of a baby to an electric *yahrzeit* "candle" which burns, not for the prescribed twenty-four hours as the ordinary wax-filled tumbler does, but for three thousand hours: a typical improvement of the technological age. In between is a formidable array of items. Many of them would be familiar to our Orthodox grandfathers. Though they might be bewildered by the variety of *mezuzot* for instance, of which one Israel firm alone supplies twenty-three designs (some not without aesthetic merit), they would feel at home with the prayer shawls, phylacteries and the fringed "four corners," as well as with the items associated with Chanukah, Purim, Sukkot and the other holidays. Our grandfathers would recognize the pitcher and tray sets for the ritual ablutions, bar mitzvah kits and wedding canopies, prayer-leaflets to ward off evil from a woman in confinement, bags of holy soil from the Mount of Olives or Rachel's Tomb to sanctify a grave in exile. They might even appreciate dish towels embroidered "*milchig*" and "*flaishig*" and the ceramic or metal plaques inscribed "*mizrach*" to identify the east wall of a room to be faced when the *Shemonah Esray* is recited.

Then they might frown. A chemical depilatory which does duty for the razor proscribed for Orthodox beards? (But there is little call for it now that an improvement has succeeded it—the electric shaver, which is apparently sanctioned because strictly speaking it

does not have a *cutting* blade.) And what of a line of *Pesachdige* cosmetics "for the strictly observant woman" (including *Pesachdige* nail polish and nail polish remover)? And even our fathers, who have lived in this country, might be startled at "Jewish" playing cards. That would seem to be a contradiction in terms: good Jews didn't play cards, except possibly during Chanukah—not even if, as in Jacob's Bible Cards, now imported from Israel, Esther were the queen of clubs and Bathsheba the queen of diamonds, Solomon the king of hearts, Jonathan the jack of spades, and Asmodeus, that devil, the joker! The older generation are familiar with Torah scrolls, the Ten Commandments, the lions of Judah . . . but what are these doing sported as decorations for bar and tie pins, watch fobs and cuff links, pen-knives and key-holders, necklaces and charm bracelets (gold-filled and solid, silver-plated copper and sterling silver, embedded in crystal or studded with pearls, rhinestones or semi-precious stones)?

To the clientele for whom these "religious" objects are intended, however, they are not at all incongruous. This clientele is only on the first lap from the cradle to the grave. It is largely the teen-agers who take to the charm bracelets, lapel emblems and the rest. In part it is mere playfulness, but in significant measure it is also their challenge: they will stand up and be counted. (Perhaps that is why Hebrew schools and Jewish day schools award them to honor students, and army chaplains to G.I.'s for attendance at services; or they may simply be playing up to what youth likes.) Why not Bible cards? Why not "religious objects dominoes"? Why not a Jewish art calendar? Why not, for Chanukah, *Twirl-a-draidel* ("sixteen times the area of the average *draidel*"), or a three-piece electric *draidel*, or a bubbling *draidel*, a Happy Chanukah Jet Ejector, Super-*Draidlach* or *draidel* jackpots? All this variety is only another example of American mass production methods and promo-

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tion. For a generation whose basic culture is American, and whose ideas of Jewishness are vague, nothing's wrong.

BUT the religious specialty stores also have a clientele composed largely of "young marrieds" and their children. In fact, it is often "for the sake of the children" that the parents dip, sometimes shallowly, into things Jewish. If they look askance at the magic of a *mezuzah*, they may still place one on the door jamb for identification; or they may substitute a door knocker inscribed "*Baruch Habah*" (welcome)—the stores have them both. Those who do not go in for soil from the Holy Land may buy practical or decorative products from Israel—the stores are full of them. They may sample the multitude of available Haggadahs in English and Hebrew, with old and new illustrations, or such other Passover wares as specially designed tablecloths and seder plates with compartments for the bitter herbs and other symbolic foods, not to mention the wine decanters and goblets engraved with the word "Pesach" to make the drinking of the four cups more ceremonious. For Shevuot such families may pick up a miniature Torah scroll for the home.

But since it is so often for the sake of the children that the parents look to their origins, the stores have ample materials for them. For the young child there are simple *alef bet* blocks, easy picture books, coloring and paste-up books such as "Fun to Color" and "Shabbos Fun," and stories to be read aloud to him, e.g., "*Alef Bet in Rhyme and Story*." For a little girl, it's an *Alef Bet Sewing Card*. The children are particularly well-served on the holidays. For Purim there are noisemakers and masks, Esther and Mordecai dolls, miniature scrolls with the story of Purim. Adapting the well known donkey game, a manufacturer has devised one in which you stick pins into Haman, that scoundrel. I have already referred to the fifty-seven varieties of *draidlach* for Chanukah. For the serious celebrants

there is every kind of menorah and candle and Chanukah activity book. Pictures of Hannah and her seven sons adorn tablecloths and napkins; other symbols appear on decorations for school and home, ranging from gold foil cut-outs to paste on door and wall to a smart new ceiling decoration—a Chanukah mobile.

For youngsters attending Hebrew school or Jewish day schools there are, besides the many textbooks and sacred books, all sorts of work books—"Bible Activity Fun Books," "Jewish History Activity Fun Books," "Scotty Paint-a-Story" (this, endorsed by *Parents Magazine*) and story books like *Dick, the Horse That Kept the Sabbath*, *Rocket Trip to Israel*, *Now It's Purim*, *Now It's Passover*, and *Tell Me About God and Prayer*.

The stores give special attention to bar and bat mitzvah youth. For boys they provide a proper Bar Mitzvah Set, which consists of a diminutive silk or rayon prayer shawl and a pair of *tefillin*, each in its (usually red) velvet embroidered bag (at \$12 and up). But before the boy appears on the *bima* of the synagogue, he has various aids to prepare for that great event, books like *Bar Mitzvah Illustrated*, perhaps his first personally owned Pentateuch (if he is to read the portion for the week), and records (if he is also to read the *Haftarah*). There is a record for every Sabbath, one to teach the special blessings, and, for the Orthodox and other ambitious boys (and their parents), the accompanying cantillations. According to the producers, the records "cut learning time in half," and "the *Haftarah* records in particular are proving extremely valuable. Bar mitzvah preparation is made easier for both student and teacher. For the boy does his *Haftarah* homework with the record as he would other assignments with a textbook, leaving the teacher—frequently the cantor and even the rabbi—additional time to attend to other synagogue affairs. We find parents learning the Torah *brachos* (blessings) with their children; rabbis

report that the *religious* participation of a father in his son's bar mitzvah adds to the 'Jewishness of the family.'" (Italics in original.)

For both boys and girls the stores offer bar mitzvah albums and greeting cards no end, in English, Hebrew and Yiddish. While most of the cards are limited to sober good wishes, some attempt flights of fancy in rhyme or rococo decoration. For the place where the party is held, "the crowning achievement in decorations" is a Happy Bar Mitzvah banner. For the presents there is Bar Mitzvah Gift Wrap with *magen davids* and bar mitzvah congratulations printed in horizontal and diagonal lines.

WHEN the children are grown up and ready for marriage (how one slips into ancient ways of thinking as one deals with ceremonial objects!), the stores can supply "The Bride's Bible," bound in white covers with the title and special prayers printed in gold. For the bridegrooms there are festively embroidered velvet skullcaps and prayer shawl bags. For both bride and groom a variety of wedding albums is available. For the rabbi who will perform the ceremony, *mit mazel*, in his wedding parlor or in the synagogue or, more grandiosely, in a hall, there are ready-made, portable canopies.

Now perhaps they are ready for the book-shelves which crowd these stores. In English they carry, as one dealer put it, everything from a slim textbook to an encyclopedia, with anthologies (serviceable for gifts), humor books and illustrated Jewish histories in highest demand. While most of these are produced by general English publishers, specialized Jewish firms provide, as the same dealer said, "from a *Tanach* (Bible) to a *bentcherel* (small book of blessings), from a *Shas* (Talmud) to a *siddur* (prayer book)."

To be up to date, these stores carry as diverse a stock of records as of books. The titles range from "Songs of the Bible" to "Freilach in Hi-Fi." They in-

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clude *chazanut*, classical music on Jewish themes, Israel songs and dances, Yiddish folk and theater songs (for which there is no great demand on the Upper West Side), recitations like "Grandmother at a Baseball Game" and readings from Sholom Aleichem. In a class by itself are the recordings adapting American popular songs in Yiddish. Some are as close to the original as "*Oi, siz a shainer free-morgen*" (Oh what a beautiful morning). Others offer equivalents: the Yiddish version of "I Got Rhythm" has such lines as "*Chob mein yingel, ver vill noch mehr von dem?*" A good parody of "H.M.S. Pinafore" is also available in Yiddish. What is surprising is the extent to which records have penetrated the modern Jewish home. Besides the entertainment records mentioned above, it is also finding room and paying as much as \$15.95 for three 12-inch L.P.'s on "Sabbath in the Synagogue" and \$12 for the strictly pedagogic "Learning to Read Hebrew with Records."

I have mentioned many items made in Israel. Just as the olive-wood inkstands and letter openers of forty and fifty years ago acquired a quasi-religious aura because they were made in the Holy Land, the present-day product is featured in the religious specialty shops. Now the choice is wider, ranging from ash trays and coaster sets to decanters and silent butlers; and the border line between secular and religious here becomes a border area through the decoration of these items with such motifs as the lion of Judah and the harp of David. One finds, too, candlesticks and candles, the Kiddush cup, *chalah* plate, *Havdalah* spice box and the nine-branched *chanukia*. These last are available in great variety: simple utility ones of brass; a new-fangled contraption which plays "Maoz Tzur" and "Hatikvah," and imaginative free forms. But despite the full attention given to the paraphernalia of holiday and Sabbath observance, the greater number of objects from Israel are intended for gifts.

IN A considerable measure these stores are gift shops. As such they go in heavily for greeting cards with a sort of "Jewish" content, following the general American fashion of substituting the ready-made message for the personal note. One of my friends who invited a woman for dinner on Sunday received from her flowers with a card, "Happy Sunday." I have not seen a "Happy Shabbat" card, but the stores seem to have one appropriate for every other occasion: birth of baby, bar mitzvah, wedding anniversary, "get well," and birthday cards above all: It's Birthday *Tzeit*; A Birthday Toast *L'Chayim*; A Birthday *Greese Kurts un Zees*; *Hob Rachmonos* It's Late for Your Birthday, and others. In a more solemn season, the best-sellers in Rosh Hashanah cards range from small single cards imprinted with two gold doves to large reproductions of paintings with fold on fold of blank paper in the best American manner. And what is a gift shop without gift wrap? Chanukah money and Chanukah picture books and games come all gift wrapped in menorah-spangled paper tied with ribbon in Zion blue and white with *magen davids* chain-printed along its length. The ready-made present, lavishly packaged, is the American—if you will, the Jewish-American—way of life; and it often looks as if only a dash of Israel sauce distinguishes one from the other.

The religious specialty stores have arisen to satisfy a demand. No more than the A & P, or Lord and Taylor, can they sell what people don't want. American Jews like these quasi-Jewish things offered in a big American way, which reminds them they are Jews without asking them not to be Americans. Matzos can have taste, can't they, and Purim is "fun," isn't it, and learning the Bible is "fun" as listening to radio quizzes is "fun," as all of American living is "fun," and, almost, American dying is fun. But why talk of dying when there is available on every hand, as one supplier has it, "Better Things for Better Jewish Living."

Recent Books

OFF LIMITS, by HANS HABE. Translated from the German. New York. Frederick Fell, Inc. 466 pp. \$4.95.

A five-hundred-page propaganda pamphlet in the guise of a novel to demonstrate that the American Army of Occupation in Germany was really little better than the Nazis and consisted largely of Negroes, degenerates and *rassenschande*-obsessed Jews. At the hands of this army Germany suffered inhumanly—some Germans were even made to fill out questionnaires where the spaces for answers were not large enough. The American authorities of course tried to drag Germany into another war against Russia. The latest in a long list of self-pitying whitewashes to emerge from Germany, this time with a tinge of Soviet propaganda added, and added crudely.

THE LITERATURE OF MODERN ISRAEL, by REUBEN WALLENROD. New York. Abelard-Schuman. 249 pp. \$4.50.

A study of the major trends and achievements of literature in Israel, traced historically from the time of the first significant Jewish migration to Palestine, around 1900, through the "new generation." A labor of love by a professor of Hebrew Literature at Brooklyn College, himself a Hebrew novelist.

BUREAUCRACY AND SOCIETY IN MODERN EGYPT. A Study of the Higher Civil Service, by MORROE BERGER. Princeton. Princeton University Press. 231 pp. \$4.75.

A special study in Egyptian government and society, based on the author's investigation of the civil service, by a prominent young sociologist.

A PIECE OF MY MIND, *Reflections at Sixty*, by EDMUND WILSON. New York. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. 239 pp. \$3.75.

A group of assorted essays and one story, by one of America's most impressive men of letters, setting forth the author's somewhat cranky views on religion, sex, education, the Jews, etc., with a brilliant and moving final chapter, "The Author at Sixty."

HEINE, A BIOGRAPHICAL ANTHOLOGY, Edited by HUGO BIEBER. Translated from the German by Moses Hadas. Philadelphia. Jewish Publication Society. 445 pp. \$4.00.

A worthwhile addition to the literature on Heine occasioned by his centennial.

NOTHING BUT THE NIGHT, by JAMES YAFFE. Boston. Little, Brown. 336 pp. \$3.95.

Another novel, coming dangerously close on the heels of Meyer Levin's *Compulsion*, on the Leopold-Loeb case—though with greater intent to fiction. By a young writer who has heretofore shown an admirable talent for dealing with middle-class West-side New York.

REFUGEES IN GERMANY TODAY, by LEO W. SCHWARZ. New York. Twayne. 363 pp. \$5.00.

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COMMUNISM AND NATIONALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST, by WALTER Z. LAQUEUR. New York. Praeger. 362 pp. \$6.50.

A history of Communism in the Middle East and its sources in, and relations to, Arab nationalism. Mr. Laqueur, an expert on Soviet and Middle Eastern affairs, has been a frequent contributor to this magazine.

HEBREW MAN, by LUDWIG KOHLER. New York. Abingdon Press. 150 pp. \$2.50.

A study of life and thought in the world of the Bible, with chapters on physical characteristic, health and sickness, how the Hebrew lived, etc., by the distinguished Swiss Bible scholar. Translated from the German by Peter R. Ackroyd.

PNIN, by VLADIMIR NABOKOV. Garden City. Doubleday. 191 pp. \$3.50.

A novel about the sad, funny and lovable Russian professor, sections of which have previously appeared in the *New Yorker*, by the most brilliant satirist of America going.

PAGAN SPAIN, by RICHARD WRIGHT. New York. Harper. 241 pp. \$4.00.

The novelist's travels through Spain, and what they yielded up in observations of the contemporary manners and morals, and political sufferings, of the country and its people.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE MIDDLE EAST, by JACOB C. HUREWITZ. New York. Columbia University Press. 160 pp. \$2.75.

A brief study, by an associate professor of Government at Columbia University, of the present situation in the Middle East, with reference to history, sociology, and politics, past and present.

Recent Hebrew Books

MISHNATO HAPHILOSOFIT SHEL HARAMBAM (Maimonides' Philosophical Teachings), by YAAKOV BECKER. Tel Aviv. J. Shimoni Publisher. 242 pp.

A selection of source materials, together with an introduction and a dictionary of philosophical terms and linguistic usages.

ARBAIM SHANA BE-AMERIKA (Forty Years in America), by ZEVI SCHARFSTEIN. Tel Aviv. Massada. 393 pp.

An autobiographical chronicle of the author's life in America since 1914.

ELE EZKERA (These I Will Remember). New York. Research Institute of Religious Jewry. 328 pp.

Thirty-nine biographies of leaders of religious Jewry in Europe who perished during 1939-1945.

HAHEVRA HAYEHUDIT (Jewish Society), by ARIEH TARTAKOWER. Tel Aviv. Massada. 382 pp.

A political, economic and demographic study of Jewish life, with an analysis of Jewish social structure and some attention to the problem of the future of Diaspora Jewry.

TOLDOT HAEMUNA HAYISRAELIT (History of the Jewish Religion), Vol. VIII, by YEHEZKEL KAUFMANN. Jerusalem. Mosad Bialik. 546 pp.

The history of the religion of Israel in the time of the Babylonian and Persian exile.

TNUAT HAPOLIM HA'ERETZ YISRAELIT (The Israel Workers Movement), by MOSHE BRASLAW-SNY. Tel Aviv. Hakibbutz Hameuchad. 423 pp.

A discussion of the movement's struggles and problems during the fourth and fifth *aliyot*.

MASSA ZAHAL B'SINAI (The Israel Army's Sinai Campaign), by SHABBETAI TEVET. Tel Aviv. Schocken Books.

The book attempts to recapitulate the circumstances leading to Israel's move against Egypt, with a full description of the military operation, explained against the background of international politics.

HAMEGILOT HAGNUZOT MIMIDBAR YEHUDA (The Scrolls from the Judean Desert), by YIGAL YADIN. Tel Aviv. Schocken Books.

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A collection of poems of many nations on the perennial subject of love—beginning with the Song of Songs. Illustrations by Aryeh Navon.

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